

PROGRESS:

CONSIDERED

WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE

TO THE

METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, SOUTH.

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Nashville, Tenn.:

PUBLISHED BY E. STEVENSON & F. A. OWEN, AGENTS,
SOUTHERN METHODIST PUBLISHING HOUSE.

1855.

Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1855, by
WILLIAM J. SASNETT,
In the Office of the Clerk of the District Court for the Middle District of Tennessee.

STEREOTYPED AND PRINTED BY A. A. STITT,
METHODIST PUBLISHING HOUSE, NASHVILLE, TENN.

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SYSTEM.

PREFACE.

A CONVICTION that Methodism might be, with great usefulness, more closely identified with the forces of society, and expanded in the sphere of her operations—that the time has come when the activities of the Church ought to be enlarged—when she ought to seize upon and employ a greater number and variety of the agencies of diffusion and improvement, has induced the composition and publication of this book. Abounding, as it does, in practical suggestions, in proposed plans and measures of improvement, in avowals of decided opinion in respect of matters of immediate concern to the Church, the author can hardly anticipate a universal concurrence of sentiment with him on the part of all who may read his work, or expect that all his views will be carried into actual practical execution—yet, he does hope to be instrumental in putting into circulation ideas that are important to the Church and society; that so many of his thoughts may find a lodgment in the public mind; that so many of his views may be practically embraced, as that this effort to make himself useful shall not be in vain.

OXFORD. GA., 1855.

SECTION I.

A MORE COMPLETE DEVELOPMENT OF CHURCH FUNCTIONS NECESSARY.

THE development of the popular element peculiar to modern times, favored by the remarkable facilities for enterprise and expansion, has given, in the present day, signal activity to the spirit of progress. A common feature everywhere of both individual and social tendency, it is restricted in its manifestation to no department of human interest; and the Church herself, in her movements and policy, has begun largely to feel its influence.

Progress, so far as it involves simply the ideas of alteration, modification, amendment, even as applied to Methodism, is not necessarily an evil. Repudiating the dogma of the Divine revelation of any specific form of Church government, it admits that her form is of human origination, and hence the possibility of its improvement. Indeed, progress in this sense, so far from being an evil, is a necessity. Methodism has been practically efficient and successful, above all other ecclesiastical organizations, mainly because in its specific features it had a precise adaptation to a greater number of the existing aspects of society. As therefore these aspects necessarily change, many of these features are temporary only in their effective operation, and must be substituted by others, else the organization is burdened with useless appendages and shorn of its efficiency. There are some great principles of Methodist economy which, deeply laid in the elements of human nature and in certain unchangeable relations of man to his Maker, are equally applicable to all generations, and

their integrity should be maintained with ceaseless solicitude. But there are many things referring to policy, modes, and usages, which, to secure the continued practical efficiency of the Church, to expand her capabilities, and enlarge the sphere of her usefulness, must be subjected to changes, modifications, and improvements corresponding with the changing aspects of society. Change, therefore, as such, is not necessarily to be resisted, and, even in respect to Methodism, may be not only admissible, but desirable.

The spirit of progress, as manifested generally, has exhibited itself under two forms. As a mere spirit of energy and enterprise, subordinating itself to thought and virtue, it is the glory of the age—conservative, yet independent and expansive. But as a mere impulse of restlessness and boldness, which, impatient of the authority of the past, despises its restraints, and, controlled by an excessive self-appreciation, knows no guides but those of caprice and expediency, it is revolutionary and fearful.

Among Methodists and as applied to Methodism, both of these forms appear—the first manifesting itself as a progress of development, and the second as a progress of relaxation. Of the latter, we do not propose to write in the present volume. It is a subject, however, of great importance at this particular juncture, the right discussion of which would doubtless confer much public benefit.

The progress of development is based upon this general idea, that, though Methodism in its beginning may have had a precise adaptation in its economy to the then existing wants of the people, yet, because of the progress of society, both in respect of religion and civilization, since that period, there are other functions of usefulness, properly belonging to the Church, which ought to be brought into exercise, and which, that the Church may not be recreant to her responsibilities and inefficient in her operations, should now be developed.

No Church organization, that is in the highest degree effective, can embrace, in any one period, all that she needs for every future period. It is for this reason, doubtless, that Revelation is silent in respect of the precise form of Church government.

Mr. Wesley, the framer of Methodism, sagacious and yet practical in the order of his mind, seized upon the prominent object of evangelical operations in his day, and wisely adapted his scheme with specific reference to its accomplishment, content, no doubt, with an abiding conviction that the providential and self-adjusting character of his organization would always secure, in each age of its existence, an adaptation necessary to entire suitableness and perfect efficiency.

And now the period has arrived when the very success of Methodism and the generally altered condition of society have placed the Church in such attitude, that her original system has become relatively a contracted one, and fails to fulfil all the functions required of her. The vast numbers she has brought within her fold have devolved upon her responsibilities which, in the outset being comparatively free from, for them, in the arrangement of her system, no sufficient provision was made. Besides the pulpit, the progress of the times has made it proper to employ other instrumentalities auxiliary to it, and which must be incorporated as necessary, not only to highest efficiency, but even to vitality itself. Methodism, therefore, though once all that the age demanded, is now relatively a narrow, restricted system. There must be development. There must be expansion. There must be a readjustment of it, in the taking on of new and additional agencies, and in the modification of existing features, bringing it thereby into more comprehensive and suitable relationship to the circumstances and wants of modern society.

The Church of God, considered as an institution ordained to diffuse and maintain the Christian religion in the world, is

designed to embrace, at every period, as integral parts of her own system of operations, every agency which the condition and circumstances of society at that period will allow, that may be made tributary to the moral elevation of mankind. It is not enough that she should devote herself to the promulgation of Divine truth, through the ordinary channels of the ministry, and rely for success upon such influences as Divine power gives to that truth thus made known; but whatever practicable forces of society, which, if subjected to the direction of the Church, would give spread and effect to the truth, and contribute to the power and success of the Church, not only may be employed as constituent parts of the great scheme of the Church, but are in fact actual functions of it, without which the system necessarily is incomplete, partial, inadequate. It is a striking characteristic, and as such, a marked defect of all Protestant Churches, that, in their scheme of operations, they are all contracted and partial. In none of them is there that expansion of sphere by which every variety of agency adapted to usefulness is appropriated. Hence, in Protestant countries a large proportion of the forces of society, left to the control of the State or of secular combination, are permitted in respect of Christian progress to run to waste, or rather to grow up as so many antagonisms to the Christian cause. In these matters, the Romish Church is wiser and far in advance, and it is to this more efficient policy she is indebted for her chief success.

Divided as Protestant Christianity is into various sects, the energies of the Churches have been expended thus far mainly in controversies upon doctrinal truth, and in settling the many questions of ecclesiastical policy, leaving, as yet, but little opportunity for the origination and execution of those practical plans of enterprise and improvement suggested by existing wants of society. And Methodism, if not hindered by like causes, has thus far been well-nigh as effectually defeated

in all expansive, comprehensive plans of usefulness, by the one-idea enterprise, glorious though it was, to which in the outset it was consecrated, and upon which its whole economy has been well-nigh exclusively concentrated.

But society is expanding. Powers hitherto dormant are being developed with wonderful force among all ranks and in all departments, and the Church, if she would retain her efficiency, and more especially, if she would step forth to the embracement of every advantage for power and success, must be content no longer with mere partial, surface operations, but, promptly availing herself of every opening offered, must profoundly and intimately identify herself with all the movements of society, and become its controlling, guiding element. This, in truth, is the true relation of the Church to society, and, until attained, her functions are incomplete and her mission incapable of fulfilment.

Such being the demand now upon the Church, we propose to point out those of her functions which, in the present state of society, ought to be developed.

SECTION II.

THE EDUCATIONAL FUNCTION.

THOUGH the world has not yet very generally adopted the principle, yet we assert it as true, that Education is properly a function of the Church.

Education, from the relation of the parties receiving it to those providing it, is emphatically a scheme of benevolence. But the Church is essentially a benevolent institution, and, possessed as her dominant principle of the disinterested spirit of her divine Head, is necessarily committed to every cause which promises amelioration and improvement to men. Her appropriation, therefore, of the educational scheme, is but a result to which her genius and spirit legitimately tend.

Education is an element of force, contributing more than all other human agencies to the improvement of the human species, and the consequent elevation of it to that condition in which Christianity may most effectually use it for the glory of God and the triumphant establishment of his kingdom. The Church, therefore, whose appointed business it is to leave no means unemployed that will in any way contribute to the progress and success of Christian interests, can leave no agency so important unappropriated, but must use it as a function legitimately her own.

Education has so long and intimate a connection with human life, at its most impressible season, that it is susceptible, above all other agencies, of being rendered an auxiliary or an antagonism to the religious well-being of men. Left to itself, and unsanctified by religious direction, it may and does become an agent of direct opposition to Christianity; but, subordinated to its control, and conducted under its auspices,

it becomes both the occasion and the instrument of Christian elevation and progress.

And, additional to the immediate moral effects of which it is capable, during the period of its actual process, there are influences, the result of it, which, through the forms of literature, and the various methods of forming and controlling public opinion, largely enter into all the elements of society, and which, in their effect, are potent for or against Christianity, according as the processes of education, during its institutional period, were or were not subjected to the control of the Church.

A force in society, therefore, so universally powerful in its susceptibility of impress upon the interests of Christianity, cannot be left, as to its control, to the mere chances of fortune, but necessarily must be subjected to the management of the Church, as a constituent part of its own system of operations.

But can the Church properly discharge the educational function thus appropriately hers, when attempted through the medium of the State? Or, to change the form of expression, when education is made a function of the State, can it be conducted as a function of the Church?

It is a characteristic of all institutions, to come under the influence, in the spirit and aims with which they are conducted, of the power which gave being to and maintains them. While, therefore, education, when dispensed by the Church, in her organic capacity, will be conducted under influences appropriate to the Church, the tendency is, in respect of education dispensed by the State, to subject it to the spirit of the State—a secular, and too often a proud, ambitious spirit.

Education, when dispensed as an immediate function of the Church, is subjected to the conduct of men who are selected with reference to the high moral qualifications they

blend with literary and scientific fitness; but, when controlled as a function of the State, repudiating the idea of sectarian association, the selections are made mainly with reference to mere intellectual qualifications; and the Board of Instruction, therefore, is not always constituted of those calculated to make education available to the Christian cause.

As a direct function of the Church, the conductors of education are authorized and expected to exercise, not only positively personal influence, but, constantly and efficiently, the immediate agencies of Christianity, to sanctify education, and to subject those seeking it not only to the control of a high standard of personal morals, but to the dominion of Christianity itself. But, when controlled through the medium of the State, the dread of the suspicion of undue sectarian influence, and of the spirit of proselytism, must necessarily hamper the energies of the most zealous, and, to a large extent, hinder those positively aggressive influences which alone could secure any very positive results in behalf of Christianity.

A comparison of the results of the two systems, in respect of the morals and Christianity of society, ought to be considered a very suitable test of their relative capabilities of influence. It has only been within recent years that the system of education, as an immediate function of the Church, has been brought into operation, on any thing like an extended scale. The oldest graduates of any of our purely denominational colleges are but lately on the theatre of public action, and yet, as respects those employments of life which are benevolent in their tendency—which have a decided bearing upon the interests of Christianity and the real weal of society—statistics will, doubtless, show that a larger number, proportionably, of those educated in denominational colleges are to be found in them, than of those educated in State institutions. And, as a further test,

we venture to assert that the moral and religious condition of the mass of the students in denominational colleges to-day is higher than that of those in State universities. We mean no reflection upon these institutions, and upon the many noble spirits who have attended them and are now connected with them. These institutions have rendered most valuable service to society, and are now largely contributing to the onward progress of education; and if the Church were not in a situation to do as much for the cause of education, and, at the same time, through it promote the higher cause of Christianity, we should still adhere to them, as the distinguished fountains of elevated education. But the truth is, the very relations of these institutions to the sources of their being necessarily disqualify them for any thing like decided and positive influence in favor of Christianity; while, in respect of education, as an immediate function of the Church, religious results are but an integral and intended part of their ordinary operations.

But it is sometimes urged, in behalf of education as dispensed through the medium of the State, that, while it leaves the young mind unbiased in its decisions upon religious truth, and, consequently, free in mature years to adopt its own independent views in respect of Christianity, that a necessary tendency of education, when controlled immediately by the Church, is to secure an early commitment to views and principles of religion. This argument would have weight with infidels or skeptics; but with those who believe in Christianity, and feel the importance of an early inclination of the heart to its spirit and precepts, and who are, at the same time, aware that this Church system contemplates the establishment of representative institutions by all the various Church organizations, and, consequently, the privilege afforded to every man of access to an institution in which Christianity is taught suitably to his own faith, it is a consideration which

can only have the opposite effect from the one designed and tend to establish the system it was aimed to overthrow. It is, in truth, a positive concession of the principle claimed, that education, as an immediate function of the Church, is more successful in its influence in behalf of Christianity, than it can be when conducted through the medium of the State.

The State can never fulfil the religious conditions involved in the management of the interests of education. It has assumed their management merely because, in failure of the Church, it was driven to it as a public necessity. The success of the Church, in all her direct efforts to control the education of the people, proves that, of right, it belongs to her, and that she ought, by her own prompt, sufficient action, so to provide for all its demands, as to leave no reason for the secular arm to interfere in the control of this great public interest. Should it interfere at all, (which we thoroughly doubt,) let its efforts be limited to mere pecuniary aid, in the building up and extension of enterprises already planned and controlled by the Church. An interest so intimately connected with the fortunes of Christianity ought never to be left to the control of a secular power, but recognized, as one of its own immediate functions, should be provided and conducted by the Church herself, on a scale commensurate with its own high claims and the most extended wants of the whole country.

But if the Church does sustain this relation to the great scheme of education, what now are those conditions which must be fulfilled to effect the right development of this function?

The first condition is, that she adopt the method of thoroughly identifying herself with it by appointing, as far as it is practicable, her own ministers as its conductors.

If it be true that education is properly a part of the system of the Church, of course it follows that, in its manage-

ment, the object should be to bring it in as close relations to the Church as possible. The influence of the Church and of the sanctities of religion upon it will be in the direct ratio of the degree in which the church is identified with it, in its immediate management. The ministry are the leading representatives of the Church, in her organic capacity, everywhere, and especially in Methodism; and their immediate management of any agency, as appointed to it by the Church, through her constituted authorities, is necessary to secure the most perfect and intimate connection of the Church with it. The fulfilment of this condition at once determines it to be a constituent part of Church operations—it at once gives to it the *imprimatur* of the church—and allying it everywhere through the connectional bond of the ministry with her functionaries, makes it, in the most intimate sense, an integral part of her system. Methodism may enact her regulations, expressive of her sense of the value of education and of her confidence in particular institutions: she may even contribute her means and patronage—and while all this may powerfully promote the interests of education as such, yet as long as she withholds her ministry—whose business it is understood to be to manage all her organic operations—from the immediate conduct of her educational operations, she, in that very policy, discredits and repudiates education as one of her own legitimate functions—she lowers and degrades it from the position of an integral element of the system of the Church, and denies herself consequently of the highest capabilities to make her educational operations tributary to her own advancement.

A thoughtful consideration of the relation of the ministry to the public sentiment and efforts of the membership every where, in respect of all that claims to be integral parts of ecclesiastical operations, at once demonstrates the necessity of

the immediate alliance of the ministry with educational interests, that the masses of the Church may award to those interests such consideration, confidence, and coöperation necessary to constitute them in fact a part of the system of the Church. They may appreciate education—patronize and encourage it—but on no other principle will they recognize it as a regular function of the Church.

The ministry, clothed with the highest ecclesiastical authority, and invested with office the most sacred, have greater facilities, by personal example and influence, to throw around the processes of education the sanctities and associations of Christianity, and consequently greater advantages to give to this great power the religious direction and effect which, as a function of the Church, it of right must enjoy.

Education under lay direction, under the most favorable circumstances, can enjoy only in a partial degree those direct and positive influences necessary to make it an element of religious experience and power; but controlled by those who, having the disposition, have also the authority and qualification, to connect with it the saving agencies of the Gospel itself, at all times, and especially on appointed occasions, the power of the Gospel is mingled with the educational instrumentalities employed, and thus the occasions of education becoming themselves a permanent theatre for the play of Gospel forces, education itself is moulded to the dominion and direction of the cause of God.

It follows, therefore, that under any other direction, education, as an element of power, if subjected at all to the uses of Christianity, is not as a result provided for, but as a mere incident and accident of the system, and that the Church can suitably provide for it as her own function—can secure to herself the necessary advantages to subordinate it to her own power and advancement—only by so allyng it with her own

system as to make her ministers, in the order of her own appointment and direction, its immediate guardians and dispensers.

To object to this conclusion on the ground that it involves a diversion of the ministry from the appointed offices of the pulpit, is to fall back upon the old restricted system that the pulpit is the exclusive Church instrumentality. The more enlarged and enlightened notion of an expansive, comprehensive system of Church instrumentalities, all combining and coöperating with the pulpit as the grand centre of them all, necessarily explodes this contracted scheme, since from the very relation of the ministry to the management of the functions of the Church, whatever belongs to her own essential operations, are proper objects of their special jurisdiction. But even admitting the tenability of the objection, so far as it would restrict the energies of the ministry to the one exclusive end of preaching, this principle, so far from involving an objection to the employment of ministers as the educators of the country, would vindicate—indeed would impose the obligation of such employment. If it be true that God converts men primarily that they may be useful, then the success of the ministry and the glory they bring to God is not to be estimated alone by the number of souls they have been instrumental in benefitting, but likewise by the character of those benefitted. While it may be true, then, that the minister who devotes himself exclusively to the pulpit, may cover a field of usefulness wider in its visible range than he who restricts himself more particularly to the sphere of educational enterprise, yet, when we properly estimate the value, to the Church and society, of those comparatively few whom he is instrumental in winning to Christ, and the influence which, as educated Christian gentlemen, and, as is often the case, Christian ministers, they are destined to exert in behalf of intelligence and Christianity, it may be that, even on the

ground of positively aggressive influence, the ministerial educator is not behind the regular pulpit minister.

If the number of Christian men and women whom our literary establishments, under Methodist auspices, have educated, and who, under God, are indebted to those Christian ministers who manned them for the spiritual change that blessed them, were abstracted from the world, and with them the total of the good they may have been instrumental in achieving, the vacuum left might not fail to convince the most skeptical that, even in respect of positively religious influence, these same ministers are not much behind a like number of the most zealous and laborious of their brethren, whose services are dispensed in fields more active.

The gains to the ranks of the ministry themselves constantly accruing, and which are the natural and necessary result of this system, especially when conducted immediately by ministers, largely more than compensate for any loss to the regular work of the ministry by this abstraction as teachers.

It follows, therefore, that so far from this being an unauthorized vocation of the regular ministry, as claimed by some, it is a condition positively essential to the development of education, as a function of the Church—that her ministry themselves be, as far as practicable, its immediate dispensers.

A second condition necessary to the right development of education, as a function of the Church, is the incorporation of the Bible and Ecclesiastical History, as a regular and prominent part of the entire course of study, in all our literary institutions.

If education is merely regarded in its secular relations as designed simply to discipline and furnish the intellect, still the Bible, as a book of literature, and in the connexions which it has with the progress and history of the world, constitutes a sphere of knowledge so comprehensive and important as to

render it a necessary part of all extended education. But if education is a power of society, which is to be subordinated to the uses of Christianity—if the Church is to employ it as one of her own functions—then, of course, she ought to avail herself of all means practicable that would contribute to render it a religious power. To fail to do this, would be to acknowledge education as a function of the Church, and yet disavow, indeed repudiate, the most important agencies by which to make it such. It would be to set Christianity to work to accomplish a certain object, and yet to deny it the very instruments necessary to adapt it to it. To make a system of education to consist exclusively of the sciences and literature of this world, leaving out that far higher science which connects man with all that is important to him in a future state, and with all that is most important to him in time, is a strange arrangement, under any circumstances, in a Christian land. It involves a principle of infidelity and folly which, under any view of the proper sources of educational provision, it is strange a Christian people will submit to. And when considered as having been, and as still being, of almost universal practical adoption, is well calculated to awaken feelings of guilty alarm. But that education should be recognized as an element of Church operations, and be sought to be subordinated to her own uses, and yet be prosecuted upon this worldly infidel plan, and yet be denied an ingredient so necessary to make it religious—so necessary to give it the strongest religious bias—involves a defectiveness in the entire scheme itself, that cannot fail to defeat its most valuable ends.

There are many important results which would ensue from the adoption of the Bible, and the studies properly connected with it, as a part of the entire course, in all our institutions of learning.

First. It would obviate that irreligious, infidel tendency, necessarily the effect of an exclusive occupancy of the youth-

ful mind with secular subjects—an effect greatly enhanced when that occupancy of it is under the direction of professed Christians, by the practical evidences of a discredit of Christianity thus constantly exhibited in the highest examples. *Second.* When properly managed, it would be a powerful instrumentality, in constant exercise, to establish in the youthful mind an abiding conviction of the truth of Christianity, and directly to lead, in thousands of instances, to the positive, practical embracement of it, in its saving influences. *Third.* By grounding youth in the knowledge of Biblical truth, it would facilitate, as to them, the more immediate instrumentalities of the Gospel, and increase, consequently, the probabilities of their final salvation. It would furnish a preparation for a more consistent, enlightened Christian experience, and would secure qualifications for usefulness, by increasing the capabilities for defending, expounding, and enforcing the truth, which, in any future capacity of minister or lay Christian, would realize themselves, in much service to the cause of God. Its effect, in its most limited manifestation, would be conservative of order and morality, and, under favorable circumstances, would powerfully contribute to secure to the entire system of education that religious direction necessary to its proper influence, as a specific function of the Church.

There ought to be, therefore, in all our higher institutions, a department of Biblical literature, presided over by men of such qualifications as to personal piety, as well as theological attainments, as would give to it the highest efficiency—in which not simply those who may be looking forward to the ministry, but the whole number in attendance, should be regularly instructed, throughout their entire course, in the Bible and Church History, as text-books; and, by these, together with frequent lectures, be made acquainted with all the topics of Christianity which are properly the objects of mere intellectual apprehension. And not only in these higher

institutions, but also in those primary and preparatory, Biblical literature ought all the time to constitute a regular part of the system of education, accommodated, in its topics and departments, to the age and capacity of the student, and conducted upon such principles as that, while the mind is constantly enriched with religious ideas, the heart, as far as may be, is at the same time impressed with their conservative, sanctifying influences.

The studied banishment of the Bible, and the branches peculiarly associated with it, from the general plan of education in our country, is a singular phenomenon. It has grown out of several causes. *First.* Education heretofore having been conducted by the State, or as a secular interest merely, the dread of the idea of a connexion of Church and State, or of the suspicion of proselytism, has naturally tended to the exclusion from the system of education of whatever might be considered as embracing the subjects peculiar to Christianity. *Secondly.* The secular idea, which has attached to education generally, has put the immediate management of it—in former years, perhaps, more than now—largely in the hands of men who, negligent themselves of the interests of Christianity, felt no concern to provide regular instruction in it in their educational methods. *Thirdly.* Conducted as education heretofore has been, as a secular interest merely, in the promotion of which all classes of men united, the infidel, irreligious tendencies of men would necessarily be so far consulted, as not to force upon them the subjects of Christianity, so far as to incorporate them as a regular department of common education. It is a necessary sequence, that, when the elements of the Church unite with the elements of the world, in all interests recognized as exclusively secular, the former will always succumb to the latter.

The difficulty of effecting radical changes in all established

systems, together with an inadequate apprehension of the importance of this change among those who have control in the premises, has tended to perpetuate this order of things, even in that system prosecuted as a function of the Church. But it is a cowardly, infidel spirit, unworthy the Church. It must be abandoned. It ought to be at once abandoned. If the Church intends to make the interests of education a part of her own great system, and use them as an agency for her own advancement, her plan is without its most important element—indeed, the very instrumentality of most potent influence is ignored—until the Bible, being erected into a distinct department of instruction, is made an integral part of the entire educational course, from its beginning to its close.

A third condition necessary to be fulfilled, for the right development of education, as a function of the Church, is an enlargement of the means of it, so as to bring it up to a standard, both of elevation and comprehensiveness, corresponding with the demands of the age.

If the Church undertakes the management of the education of the country, of course it is incumbent upon her to do so—not merely to an extent sufficient to give countenance to the general subject, but to any extent necessary to meet the full measure of its demands. She cannot assume the direction of this great interest as peculiarly her own, and yet, with narrow and restricted views and contracted liberality, leave a large sphere of its objects unthought of and unprovided for. To do so would be to manifest either criminal neglect, or absolute incompetency to discharge the function to which she is committed and pledged, and in either case would justify the adoption of this interest by any other agency that would more suitably provide for it. It is her duty, therefore, to take a comprehensive survey of the entire range of the relations which this subject sustains to society, and be content, in the

arrangement of its plans, with nothing short of such practical development of it as will fully and successfully fulfil all these relations.

A thoughtful appreciation of the relations of education to the existing civilization of our country will show that the elevation of its standard is imperatively demanded. The prevalence of the popular element in our civil institutions, and the importance, therefore, of the general education of the masses, has heretofore given a direction to our educational energies mainly to the great work of diffusion, and elevation has been comparatively lost sight of, as a want of society. Accordingly, while, since the commencement of our government, schools have multiplied almost incalculably, and the facilities for popular education have been rendered well-nigh universal, yet, an inspection of the curriculum of study now pursued in all our higher educational establishments, will show that, in respect of the number of branches of study, and the extent to which they are prosecuted, there has been, in all that time, comparatively little progress. But, in the mean time, society, under the influence of the active intellectual tendencies so wonderfully existing in our country, has been carried to a stage of intellectual progress far in advance of its earlier growth—so that, if there was, in that early day, any suitableness in the standard of education prevailing to the wants of the time, that standard has, of course, been far outgrown, and can have no completeness of adaptation to the demands of the present age. How many branches of study are there, which are absolutely necessary to a full preparation for the active duties of life, in our advanced stage of civilization, that have as yet found no place in our highest educational establishments. How many of those that are embraced are necessarily, under our present hurried course, but partially and imperfectly pursued. If we understand the educational course as designed to furnish a basis for all the various depart-

ments of knowledge in which men are to be engaged, or with which they are to be thrown into contact, in future life, then the standard of education, however well it may have answered in former times, is now far below the wants of our country.

But an elevation of the standard of education is now an imperative demand—not only that thereby all the required branches now left out, or but imperfectly pursued, might be fully embraced, but likewise for other most important reasons.

American society, as at present constituted, owing to many causes that might be specified, has a predominance of the utilitarian element. Great in all those capabilities which have practical improvement and money for their objects, it has but little of that reflective cast of mind which adapts it to the origination of new truth, or which adapts it to habits of enlarged philosophic thinking. The human mind may be regarded, as it exhibits itself in society, as having two functions: the one, perceptive in its character, adapting it to an apprehension of things in their existing aspects and relations; and the other, philosophic in its character, adapting it, by its capacity, to apprehend those great principles which underlie and govern all subjects, and to reason upon the relations these sustain, to judge of the consequences of actions—to prophesy of the future. The former gives tact, practical capacity, and power of execution: the latter gives judgment, wisdom, and safe direction. Now, the former is so largely the predominating element of American society, as almost completely to hold in abeyance any development of the latter; and, from causes connected with the nature of our civil institutions, and the wide-spread facilities for utilitarian projects our country affords, it is constantly becoming more entirely the exclusive element of our civilization. It is seen, in the general tendency of society, to be influenced by considerations of present good and of immediate practical results, rather than by a policy which, founded upon a thoughtful

appreciation of the true relations of things, estimates all questions in the light of their prospective bearings and entire consequences—in a tendency which exhibits itself in a spirit of haste in all the movements of society, which ignores the idea of the future, and sacrifices prospective interests to present gains—in a spirit of impatience, which seeks to accomplish results at once, by arbitrary force, rather than by conformity to the more sure and effective operations of natural law; and in a spirit which, in the affairs of government, gives itself up, unrestrained by constitutional guards or philosophic reasonings, to ideas alone of immediate, present results—which, in the field of adventure, devotes itself to empiricism, *filibusterism*, and wild propagandism—which, even in the more staid movements of society, incompetent or indisposed to a wide survey of the bearings of the objects of enterprise, either fails to develop them, or, seeks to do so in some empirical way, in which, reckless of those great natural laws—a suitable use and disposition of which alone can work out fitly any great and permanent results of good to men—speediness in realization is the only rule of action.

The predominance of this utilitarian element is still farther seen in the almost entire absence, among our public men, of those great, original thinkers who, distinguished for their profoundly philosophic grasp and capacity for enlarged and comprehensive thinking, give to their intellectual efforts a power and universality which spread their thoughts over the entire nation, and secure for them a national influence. Of these, there are now fewer than in the former days of the Republic. For those causes, arising out of the nature of our country's institutions and circumstances, to which this predominant element is indebted, have been growing in their effects; and hence, in the earlier stages of American society, during the formative periods of our great men, its condition was better suited than now for the production of the higher

philosophic order of mind. It is likewise seen in the absence of those profound thinkers in any of the departments of science or literature, who stand out as the great lights of the world, and to which other civilizations have been indebted for their highest achievements—in the dependence of our country upon foreign importations for that influx of new and great ideas which give direction and tone to the profound movements of society—in the almost entire absence of a literature, profound and philosophical, and the universal currency of a literature, light, superficial, and evanescent. These are indices of a nation shallow and superficial in its thinking, and which, without power of deep, comprehensive reflection, gives itself only to ideas of the present.

American society needs a fuller development of the philosophic element. It would not be difficult to show that the maintenance of our civil institutions unimpaired, the right employment of the functions of the Church, and the progress of every vital interest of society, so far depend upon it, as to make it absolutely indispensable. But, replete as society now is with forces that antagonize this element, the only hope of the country, to secure it, is in a deeper and more protracted mental training during the educational process. If here, during the mind's formative season, such a course could be adopted as would bring out the strong powers of the mind, and subject them to such habits of rigid discipline as would develop the faculties of ratiocination and furnish them with their suitable materials; and if this course could be so protracted as to fix and make permanent these results as actual parts of the intellectual constitution, then society would gradually secure an accession of mind of more vigorous, thoughtful cast, and American civilization would take on the elements of judgment, wisdom, and philosophy, now her profoundest want. But to do this, an elevation of the standard of education is indispensable. In its present limits,

experience has demonstrated its inadequacy to the task. But any just appreciation of the relations of the educational system to the mind's culture, together with the experience of its results, even in its present barren, inadequate provision, will convincingly demonstrate that there might be an expansion and elevation of it to such degree as would secure these high results—as would render education itself the capable agency of providing for American society the grand element needed.

An elevation of the standard of education would greatly increase the number of the literary and scientific class, or, in more general terms, of those who devote themselves to purely intellectual pursuits. The present standard of education, in reference to such pursuits, has but little more than a negative action, tending simply to remove such obstructions to them as may enable men of extraordinary genius, or in circumstances peculiarly favorable, to engage in them; but a higher standard, in which the mind is longer held to a system of training, and is furnished on an ampler scale with the stores of highest learning, would give to the educational system a power of positive impulse to intellectual pursuits—would give to it the capability of establishing such habits and tastes as that, as the effect of its operation, a much larger number would devote themselves to more purely intellectual vocations, and all would share in a higher degree an elevated intellectual tendency. These results themselves would greatly tend to counteract the excessive utilitarian tendencies of American society, and to give to our civilization its needed element of profound and comprehensive intellectual power: it would bring out, in just proportions and prominence, that class of intelligence which gives character and distinction to a nation, and which, more than all others, contribute to that general intellectual elevation which is the surest mark of high national progress.

But an elevation of the standard of education in our country is demanded, in view of important moral results.

The present system often works disastrously in two ways. Incompetent in a great variety of cases, because of its limitedness to establish a permanent discipline or to furnish the mind with those ample and enlarged intellectual stores which secure an adaptation at once for the active career of life, and yet embracing so much of the time and attention of youth as to be incompatible with the acquisition of practical business knowledge and habits, it throws its subjects out into the active world without qualifications adapting them to their circumstances, and with no immediate resources suited to existing demands. Precluding the opportunities for that ordinary training which association and contact with the practical operations of life furnishes, it yet comes short of fulfilling the conditions of training and furniture necessary to adapt to the higher walks of life, and in this unprepared state its subjects are ushered upon the theatre of active life. In this condition, requiring, of right, a still further probation and discipline, what wonder that many, disappointed and deceived, give themselves up to idleness, and, inefficient and inactive, become mere drones in society—what wonder that many betake themselves to dissipation and vice, and, ruined themselves, become corruptors of society!

Again: the limitedness of the present educational system makes it practicable, with any thing like uninterrupted pursuance of it, to complete it some time before the period of proper manhood—before, at least, the period of legal manhood is reached, and consequently, in reference to the largest portion of our graduates, there is an interval of time, of greater or less extent, between the period of the actual completion of their course, and that in which, by age, they are qualified for the duties of active life. What wonder that in that period of freedom from restraint, and of leisure, when, with-

out the habits of mind established by a sufficiently protracted system of discipline and the conservative influences of extensive stores of mental acquisition—when, indeed, their own characters are without full and complete formation—they should so betake themselves to wild, random life as to lose the benefits of former advantages—as to lose all taste for laborious, self-denying pursuits—or, indeed, worse than all, to become positively corrupt and vicious!

Consequences like these, of not unfrequent occurrence, have made collegiate education unpopular with a large class of society, and have contributed as much as any other cause to the hinderance of the educational interests of the country. It is not education itself which gives rise to these deplorable results. It is rather the want of it. It is the limitedness of its scale as at present developed. And, as well that these results might be forestalled—as well that the educational system might be invested with ample power, really and fully to fit its subjects for the actual duties of life, which is, indeed, its true conception, and not, by coming short of it, more than defeat its own ends—as that the occasions for reproach and opposition might be precluded, the standard of education in our country ought to be elevated.

Under the present system, closing as it does with almost all, before the developing, maturing process is ended, a large portion of the formative period of life, and that, too, the most susceptible of benefit from educational advantages, is unappropriated. That this period may be subjected to the educational process, and every advantage be afforded that process for the accomplishment of its complete results, an elevation of the standard of education is imperatively demanded.

To accomplish this elevation, several methods are practicable. Either the standard of qualification for admission into the lowest class might be so raised as to admit of a much more enlarged and comprehensive system of study during the

four years' course; or an additional year or two might be added, as supplementary to, or an extension of, the present course; or a new class of educational establishments might be founded—beginning their course where that of our existing colleges terminates—in which that enlarged and comprehensive course of study is embraced proper to the true idea of a University, and supplying in the wide sphere of its operations, facilities for qualification for every department of life.

The system of education established by the Church will be below the standard of comprehensiveness demanded by the relations of this agency to society until she specifically provides for the encouragement and maintenance of a class of men specially devoted to the cause of learning.

It is important, in all periods, that there be an order of men who are distinguished for profound and critical scholarship, that, by their own example, the learning they display, and the actual improvements they effect in literature and science, they may give requisite impulse and facilities to the educational cause. But there is now a demand for men of deepest learning in the precincts of the Church which never existed in any former period. Infidelity, heretofore, has concerned itself mainly with those aspects of truth which, more plain and obvious, were cognizable by the common understanding, and susceptible of defense without the acquirements of critical learning. But, baffled in respect of these, in modern times it is seeking to accomplish the same nefarious purposes, by taking advantage of the Christian world to turn the resources of learned criticism and scholarship against the truth of God. In the open field of controversy, in which the fundamental principles of truth are involved, we may not expect infidelity again to enter. These principles it has once subjected to the crucible, and, coming forth unharmed and the brighter, it will be cautious of further exhibition of its weak-

ness and folly in the same field. Its prevailing spirit now is, and perhaps will continue to be, a critical spirit; and it is in the field of learning and scholarship that its hardest battle is now to be fought. In Germany, as the great centre of operations, in Great Britain, and even in the United States, its hosts are marshalled, and nothing but a successful counter-movement by the friends of the truth will prevent results which every Christian must deplore. We need then, in the Church of God, a class of men thoroughly accomplished in the highest departments of learning and criticism—who are prepared successfully to resist the infidel on his own ground of warfare, and, as the friends of the Bible did, in reference to geology, turn their own weapons to the work of their own overthrow, and to the establishment of the cause of truth. And Methodism, undertaking as she does to fulfil the conditions of a true Church, in meeting all the various wants of the times, cannot be indifferent to a provision so important to her own progress—so necessary to the highest and most rapid triumphs of the cause of God.

But to secure this class of men—devoted to discoveries in science—to historical, philological, and ethnological researches—to the extension of the field of general literature—to Biblical criticism and interpretation—and to the preparation of books, and especially of suitable text books, in all these departments thus necessary to the educational and religious interests of the country, and the general progress of society—there ought to be foundations, of the nature of the fellowships in the English Universities, connected with our higher educational establishments, by which men, whose qualifications and tastes eminently fit them for these pursuits, might be supported, and thus, relieved from worldly care and solicitude, allowed to devote themselves, without let or hindrance, to these high public interests. As long as no provision of this kind is made, and literary men of every class are

encumbered with the drudgery and care of providing the ways and means of pecuniary support, there will not only be a much less number of purely literary men, but there will necessarily be, in the progress of literary life, such obstructions as must prevent the highest success. Whoever understands the laws of the mind, knows that it is capable of achieving its highest results, of conducting its processes most successfully — especially when they embrace an extensive sphere of investigation, and are protracted — only when it is allowed to act uninterruptedly free from diversion and distraction; and consequently, he who is so dependent upon the business world as that a division of his time and attention is necessary, to provide for it, is less qualified, not only by the loss of time, but in virtue of the laws of his own intellectual constitution, for the most successful prosecution of purely literary pursuits.

But this provision for suitable support, thus made, by suitable endowments, would meet this necessary law, and, disencumbering these lofty minds of the country, would set them free to devote their time without loss, and their intellects without distraction, to those great objects, so well worthy of public concern and of public maintenance.

This arrangement, by the access it would give to extensive public libraries, which the full expansion of the educational function contemplates, and the facilities afforded for combinations and mutual help among the literary class, and the attainment of those valuable ends which result from their mutual intercourse, would give to this class advantages for its growth and success that, under no other system, could be supplied, and without which, it never can attain, in American civilization, its rightful position and influence.

The bounty and privilege thus conferred upon this class, by the special direction and appointment of those having authority in the premises, would not fail to establish a claim of the public upon them, which, while it would powerfully contribute

to stimulate and sustain their noblest endeavors, would likewise tend to give them that direction most demanded by the public interests. In this case, these literary minds would not be left, as now, to the exclusive guidance of individual expediency and selfish interest, in which course their force is often spent in unprofitable fields and in hurtful operations, but, sustaining the recognized relation of public servants, would lend themselves, under every incentive, to application to the enterprises only of public benefit. And if this scheme of public endowment for the maintenance of this class, be the work of the Church in the development of her educational function—which of right it should be, and to which we invite the Church as an important duty—then this subjection of this class would be, not to the public generally, but to the Church as such, in which case the effect would be, not merely to preclude the powerful influence of this class against the interests of Christianity, but to render it available as one of the effective forces of the Church in the spread of light and the maintenance of truth and knowledge throughout the world. The Church should avail herself of an instrumentality so potent to do her harm if unappropriated, and so influential in her operations if thus employed; and her educational function properly developed, must necessarily embrace a method so practical and easy for its successful accomplishment.

In an educational system sufficiently broad to meet the entire wants of society, and which the Church, if she commits herself to the management of it, must not stop short of a suitable provision for that professional education susceptible of impartation in the schools, must be embraced. The efficiency and success of all those departments of human life, known as the learned professions, and all those interests of general convenience and social well-being and progress which grow out of them, are largely dependent upon the extent and thoroughness with which those who pursue them are in

the outset trained in those fundamental principles appropriate to them. Hence, in all advanced civilizations, professional education has been regarded as belonging to the general system of educational provision, and schools are maintained with direct reference to its suitable prosecution. As well, therefore, because of the important position it occupies in the great educational scheme, as because of its susceptibility, like every other department of education, of being appropriated as an active power in the precincts of the Church, it is incumbent upon the Church, as a further development of her educational function, at once to incorporate, as far as practicable, in connection with her other educational interests, a suitable provision for an ample professional education. As all great enterprises are necessarily gradual in their largest development, this great feature has, up to this period, been left out of the educational movement, as a function of the Church. But important as this class of education has always been, it is now more than ever so, and will be increasingly so as society grows older; and the Church, therefore, if true to the country and to herself, can no longer postpone this broader extension of her educational enterprise.

It constitutes a weighty argument in favor of the plan of establishing those higher institutions to which our colleges would be preparatory, suggested, as a suitable method to provide for an elevation of the standard of education, that they might be conveniently used as the establishments in which to incorporate the facilities for the prosecution of professional education; and likewise a consideration showing the practicability of the scheme proposed, of a provision for a distinct literary class, that these might be connected with these grand universities, and made an integral part of a grand *corps* of instructors, as well in this professional department as in all the other departments, embracing, in the whole, in

amplest range and fulness, the entire sphere of human knowledge.

What splendid sources of light these grand universities, thus constituted and directed, would become in the midst of American civilization! Here the educational function would find its highest expression and exert its mightiest force. Standing out as the great agencies of the highest and completest style of education, combining the amplest facilities for the impartation of every class of knowledge—the Mecca of the student, the home of the learned and the wise—they would infuse a spirit of intellectual improvement—they would give power and elevation to educational agencies wherever existing—they would bring forth, in available forms, those fruits of highest learning and intellect, that would indeed constitute them the most potent instrumentality of development and progress known to American civilization.

A fourth condition required to be fulfilled, to secure a full development of education, as a function of the Church, is the ample endowment of our higher educational establishments, particularly those devoted to the education of males.

As necessary to a provision of educational facilities, on the amplest scale, extended arrangements in respect of fixtures, libraries, apparatus, and museums, are absolutely indispensable. Without these, education, so denominated, may be furnished; but it will not be education of those enlarged and ample dimensions adapted to the wants of a great nation, and commensurate with the obligations of a great Church.

The Boards of Instruction ought to be so full as to allow each officer ample time for his own improvement and the perfection of the facilities of his department. Until this result is achieved, our institutions of learning will but rarely enjoy the services of men competent to infuse in them the highest capabilities, or to impart to the educational cause its noblest lustre.

But as long as these institutions are sustained only or mainly by the pecuniary avails of mere tuition fees, necessarily this important result will be unattained. No institution in this country can retain this number of officers which is not pecuniarily supported, for the most part at least, by an ample permanent endowment. No collegiate institution ought to expect to retain the services of a competent faculty, under any circumstances, whose dependence for income is upon patronage alone. Methodist colleges in the past are, in some sense, exceptions to this general statement. For, manned mainly by Methodist preachers, who have been accustomed to hard work and low wages, it has been thus far practicable to secure their services in the colleges on a like plan of small remuneration. But even Methodist institutions, with this peculiar advantage, have themselves greatly suffered by the lack of adequate pecuniary support.

Again : Education, as a function of the Church, has necessarily connected with it a benevolent feature. It is not enough to fulfill its conditions, even in respect of the more advanced stages of it, that it provides for those who are able to pay for it ; but it must have an active function, whose property it is to seek out the indigent of merit, and, by the inducements it offers, to bring them within the sphere of its highest operations. The high results of good of which the educational scheme is capable, in respect both of the country and the cause of God, in this particular application and use of it, demonstrate that, sustaining the relation of a regular Church function, it would involve a recreancy to its own legitimate aims, if not given a direction suitable for their accomplishment. The many bright lights to be found everywhere in our country, contributing to its splendor and improvement, and to the usefulness of the Church, who are indebted to the benevolent feature of some of our highest institutions for the educational facilities that made them,

attest the glorious efficiency of this instrumentality, and vindicate the propriety and obligation of the largest provision for its fullest exercise. But though enough has been done in this benevolent field, especially by Methodist colleges, to vindicate its practicability and importance, yet the occupancy of it has been by no means commensurate with its extent in this country. And there is no duty now more pressing upon the Church than this extension of the educational function. It is in this particular field, especially, that the Church may make her educational interests tributary to her own advancement, since its necessary effect is to secure a constantly increasing class devoted to her interests, and of highest efficiency in the promotion of her influence. This beneficiary class, feeling their dependence upon, and appreciating their obligations to, these institutions, exercise, while they are students, a most conservative influence upon the inmates of these institutions; and by cooperating, in their influence with the authorities, always greatly contribute to harmony, order, and good government. On this account, the cause of education itself is greatly promoted by the incorporation of this benevolent feature. But to provide for it on a scale correspondent with existing wants and obligations, an extended endowment is, of course, indispensable. No institution, without such endowment, however well disposed its immediate managers, is in circumstances to afford these benevolent facilities to any thing like the desired extent. The Methodist colleges of this country, though established and maintained by the richest Christian denomination of the Union, are, with fewest exceptions, almost entirely without endowment; and consequently whatever may be said of them as an earnest of future enterprise and achievement, yet now, in respect of many of the most important functions they ought to fulfill, they are necessarily largely hindered in their efficiency.

It is a gratifying indication of the growth of more enlightened public sentiment, that in respect of many of the higher educational establishments, efforts are being made to enlarge their capabilities, by an increase of their pecuniary resources. Shall Methodism, assuming, as she does, the management of the educational interests of her people, withhold the means, enjoying them, as she does, in such rich abundance, to place her own institutions of learning in the highest rank of usefulness? Endowment is now the great want of Methodist colleges. Patronage they have, and, if not inconsiderately multiplied, patronage they will continue to receive in increasing amount. It is the means of enlargement, of increase of facilities, of expanding the benevolent feature, they need; and prompt and liberal action for their provision is now a pressing demand upon Methodism, for the right unfolding of her educational function.

The relation sustained by our academy system to the cause of education, has an importance not usually ascribed to it. Occupying the intermediate place in the great educational system, it is not only the source of supply to our highest educational establishments, but sustaining to them a preparatory relation, and furnishing thereby the basis upon which the college curriculum rests, the whole character of collegiate education, the efficiency and success of the college itself, are in great degree dependent upon it. Indeed, the educational institutions of the country, as constituted of the common school, the high school, and the college, can be properly appreciated only when considered as parts of one great system, and so intimately related to each other, that the success of each is largely dependent upon the efficiency and prosperity of the rest. And this connection, thus subsisting between the high schools and those still higher, to which they are preparatory, was, perhaps, never more sensibly felt than at present. The greatest hinderance now experienced by our colleges to that critical-

ness and thoroughness of education which it is their office to dispense, and which the country claims from them, is the lack of that previous preparation, which it is the design of these schools to afford. And in respect of the great interests of public education, the most serious concern of the present moment is the better appointment of the academy, so as to secure greater thoroughness—a more perfect drilling in the elementary departments in all those fundamental branches of study which underlie the college course, and which constitute an indispensable qualification to the successful prosecution of all elevated liberal education.

But the importance of the academy is seen not merely in this relation to other educational establishments. From the absence of disposition, of capacity, or of means to continue the course of education in the highest institutions, as respects a large class of the rising generation, these schools furnish the highest educational advantages enjoyed. In them many complete their educational course, and from them go forth without further educational opportunities, to take their places upon the theatre of active life. In an important sense, therefore, they control the standard of education throughout the country, and the character, as well as the extent, of the educational benefits diffused are largely dependent upon them.

As important then as are our colleges in the work of elevating, perfecting, and illustrating the standard of liberal education, in the great work of providing educational facilities adequate to the demands of the age and commensurate with the requirements of the existing civilization, these subordinate schools are none the less valuable, are none the less indispensable, in any scheme of educational provision for the people.

The Church, therefore, to develop her educational function fully, must provide for the people the academy no less than the college. She must seize upon all openings presented, to

establish these institutions, and to bring those already existing, whenever the contract can be judiciously made, under her own immediate management. She must do more than this. She must see that these institutions are properly officered, both as to religious and literary qualifications, so that she can feel and give the assurance to the country, that while their influence is an effective force in behalf of the Church, their course of instruction is sufficiently thorough and critical to constitute them efficient and suitable preparatory establishments to the higher institutions under her management.

The Church has already adopted this policy, but not so extensively as that the academies under her auspices are sufficient to answer the demands of the Church, which ought to be their limit. In every community where she can sustain an academy, she ought to establish one, under her own direct control. An occasional institution of this kind, established at distant points, may be sufficient to indicate a bare appreciation of the Church of educational interests, but not to supply her people with the educational facilities she should undertake to do. Nor does this policy, heretofore pursued, sufficiently identify the Church with the management of these academies. A mere formal recognition of these institutions by Church authorities, as under her auspices, is a step just sufficiently far to hold her responsible before the world for their management; but not far enough to secure to herself the actual power of controlling them. She ought to go further, and by an immediate appropriation of them, assume the control of their literary and religious character. Thus multiplied, and thus directly managed by the agencies of the Church, her educational function in reference to them would be rightly developed, so that while they subserved the valuable purpose in the education of the country appropriate to them, they would at the same time be duly subservient as an available force in the furtherance of the Christian cause.

The enterprises of education, as conducted by Methodism, and the churches generally, have been restricted thus far, with that exception of the benevolent feature incident to its higher establishments, mainly to those able to pay for their educational privileges: they have terminated for the most part in a mere provision of the necessary facilities, and in placing those facilities in a simply passive relation, to be enjoyed only by those who actively seek them, and consequently only by those who comply with the condition of pecuniary remuneration for them. That large class, therefore, who, under the disabilities of ignorance, are without disposition to become the active, spontaneous seekers of education, or who, under the disabilities of poverty, are unable to comply with the pecuniary condition, have been left out of the scheme of educational provision, as a function of the Church, as thus far unfolded. Perhaps, in the nature of the case, this, thus far, has been unavoidable. A scheme of so wide comprehension, and embracing so many conditions necessarily must be gradual in its developments, and it was conforming to true philosophy to have begun in the order of establishment with the higher grades of educational provision. These the more immediate and pressing wants of the country and of the Church in the outset most naturally suggested, and were needed first to give practicability to further expansion to these all-embracing interests. Education, to become universal, must first exhibit itself in its highest forms. As a system, it works its way into and permeates the mass rather by the law of descent than of ascent, and it is by the most effective support of the colleges and high schools that the means and methods are to be made practicable for its widest application.

But the scheme of education, as managed by the Church, having so far unfolded itself as to have provided, in no very

limited degree, these higher establishments, the period has arrived when, in the order of things, it is practically capable of such further extension as is necessary to the full exhibition of the benevolent feature, and when the Church should begin to direct herself to this as a specific object of the educational function.

That the Church should give to her educational agencies an aggressive capability, having for its object in the most efficient methods practicable, the diffusion of some measure of education throughout the entire masses of society, is evident from all the considerations which show education to be a function of the Church. It is not enough—as important as is that specific direction of her enterprise—that she should stop with the largest provision of those educational facilities which sustain a merely passive relation to society—as, for example, her Colleges and High Schools—but for the same and even additional reasons, she must go further and invest her educational agencies with such aggressive capabilities as that, by intention, they constantly and positively tend to their own universal application.

But while it is generally admitted that it is due to society that education should thus be universally dispensed, the popular idea is, that its provision is a function of the State rather than of the Church. And this idea, developing itself as it has already in some of the States in the actual adoption of plans of common school education, and generally entertained as the only conception which the subject allows, has effectually diverted the Church from this, her own appropriate field, and, for the present at least, in a great degree barred it from her own proper occupancy. Indeed, so prevailing has been this idea—so overwhelming its influence upon the general mind—that even the most of those the steadiest in their conviction of the propriety of making education, in its most

advanced departments, the function of the Church, yet concede that these provisions of it for the masses are properly the business of the State.

Now, it must be admitted, that since our government repudiates all connection of Church and State, it is impossible to give to common school education by the State such a positively religious character and direction as are necessary to make it a positively religious agency, and yet that this department of the educational function is susceptible, perhaps above all other, if properly employed by the Church, of being made tributary to the advancement of the religious interests of society. All the considerations, therefore, which go to establish the educational agency to be a function of the Church, press with peculiar weight against the surrender of this particular department of it to the State. Hence, it is incumbent upon the Church that she should not thus be blind to her own responsibilities, and allow an agency to pass into other hands and perhaps become an antagonism to her own interests which, under a freer and fuller development of her own system, she might make in a powerful degree conducive to her own advancement.

While it is no more than might have been expected of those who regard education in the mere light of a secular interest, that they should conceive the State to be the grand agency of its application to all classes, and especially to the poor and humble, yet it is equally to be expected that those who regard it as susceptible of becoming a religious instrumentality, so far from seeking to place it, in any of its departments, under the control of an agency exclusively secular, would rather repudiate such connection and direct their energies to such plans as would result in giving the Church the control of it in every department of its interests.

There might be some apology for the friends of Christianity in this surrender of an important agency, if it were to be but

a temporary surrender—to be submitted to for the present, in view of a pressing existing want which the slower operations of the voluntary principle were inadequate immediately to supply, or in view of its tendency to hasten on such progress of the Church as is necessary to her proper assumption of this, her own function. But, unfortunately, these advocates of State agency do not thus regard it as a mere transient expedient, but are for the most part committed to it as the true and only policy, in all time, for the general diffusion of education, and when once practically adopted, it necessarily becomes so far a monopoly as effectually to close up this field to all future movements of the Church.

The truth is, the Church has never yet generally awakened to a proper conception of her relation to education as one of her own proper functions. The wide secular bearing which it has, and the consequent strong interest which secular men have manifested in it, have too much overborne the Church, and forestalled the proper appreciation of the religious element and relationships it of right should enjoy. And this tendency in reference to common school education has been greatly strengthened by contracted notions of the capabilities of any other agency as compared with the State—by the example of other governments whose wont is to assume in their own right what properly belongs to the people—and of some of our own States, in which, however, the results of the plan as compared with what might have been achieved on the voluntary plan of the Church, in the light either of religion or of philosophy, afford no encouragement to its application in other communities. What the Church now greatly needs is a more thorough and enlightened apprehension of the true relation she sustains to the entire sphere of educational agency. Could this be realized she never would be content with this surrender of it in any particular to the State, but, with a just and comprehensive appreciation of her own responsibilities,

her effort would rather be to embrace it as her own, and using it as her own, to give its capabilities their highest force and their every possible application.

But waiving this objection, and putting the question of State agency in behalf of common school education on the ground only of its efficiency as compared with other agencies of a spontaneous or voluntary character, and still it will be condemned as an inferior and objectionable method.

Experience has been generally uniform in its testimony that those enterprises wherein government has undertaken the immediate management of the interests of the people—such as banks, public institutions, works of internal improvement—have been feeble and inefficient, compared with those similar of a private character. And in what respects could a system of public education, conducted by the State, more complex and comprehensive, have advantages for more favorable comparison?

Common school education, conducted by State agency, dependent as it is upon State legislatures, necessarily, under our form of government, becomes complicated with the politics of the country, and the hinderances thus experienced, together with the unwieldy, cumbrous character of its machinery, must necessarily make its movements laggard, vacillating, and uncertain. As a private enterprise, without this necessity for delay, and unhindered by collateral issues and dependencies, it would enjoy concentrated, undivided attention; and those who prompted to it by their own appreciation of it and zeal would be most likely to give it the liveliest impulse and the most active progress. The machinery of the State adapted to a variety of aims must be inefficient as respects any one of them, as compared with an organism originated and sustained for its exclusive prosecution. The spirit and energies of a people, in reference to any great object in which they are interested, must be hampered and restricted

when compelled to act only through the slow processes of the State when compared with the freedom of their own spontaneous, undisturbed operation.

The legislatures, composed as they are of men whose appointments have been conferred with reference mainly to political considerations, would hardly be so likely to embrace those best qualified to attend to this great interest, as would those spontaneous movements of society in its behalf, in which the most competent naturally rise to the surface as their marked and prominent leaders. At any rate, they would be composed, to an extent greater or less, of those without qualifications to govern this interest, and of those without zeal in its behalf; and a body thus constituted necessarily would be far less qualified to give wise and efficient direction to this interest than would be those who, as a spontaneous social movement, would be recognised as entitled to precedency and control. So many issues are involved in the canvass for legislative membership, that usually but few are returned competent to direct an interest so comprehensive and intricate, and those few are hampered and restrained by others stupid and incompetent. But as a social movement alone, in which natural laws are allowed unobstructedly to work out their results, the natural tendency will be to turn up in the front rank those, and those only, the best qualified to push it forward, and every practicable force will be brought into action for its most successful progress.

In a comparison, therefore, of the relative efficiency of the principle of State agency and the principle of spontaneous agency in behalf of common school education, the superiority is evidently in favor of the latter.

But we take still higher ground. We maintain that the provision of education for the people is in no wise the business of the government, and that in so far as it assumes such

provision, it transcends its true design and legitimate sphere of action.

Government must necessarily have its limits, else it becomes a power of unlimited use, and consequently of abuse. The true republican idea is, that government exists for protection—the protection of each individual against all others, and of community generally against the encroachments of foreign power. The sphere of republican government, therefore, is essentially negative, with only so much of the positive element as may be actually necessary to maintain it in this character. Republicanism adheres to this idea, because it alone is compatible with the largest civil liberty, and because it is the only distinct and practicable limit. If a step further is advanced, and government is invested with positive functions, necessarily the principle of mere expediency is introduced, and the guarantees of liberty are virtually lost. The idea, therefore, that government has so universal a relation to all the positive interests of society as to make their management a part of its own legitimate operations, belongs to monarchical and despotic, but not to republican, governments. Under these latter, the State, so far from being all-comprehending and absorbing, has its own distinct sphere, and that sphere is limited to the object of the mere protection of the people, leaving them unrestricted and untrammelled by any interference of its own, to work out their own fortunes.

However desirable then may be the universal diffusion of education, yet since a provision of it by the government necessarily involves the principle that government is not confined in its action to the great objects of protection, leaving the people free to develop and manage their own affairs, but that it may positively interfere in, and of its own right assume the management of the absolute interests of the people themselves, it is an assumption of prerogative, not only for-

eign to its own legitimate authority, but in direct contravention of its genius and spirit.

The true character of our government has been in the main well understood and conformed to in the legislation of the country; and while in the monarchical governments of the old continents the people have been hindered and oppressed by this interference of government in the management of affairs legitimately their own, our policy has been, in reference to these matters, to leave the people free, assuming that in their own hands, unrestrained and untrammelled, the conditions of their existence and prosperity would be more properly fulfilled. In America it has been the absence of governmental interference, and the freedom of the people in the origination of plans of enterprise and improvement, that has given them their present lofty elevation as a race, and to the country its unexampled prosperity. Why, then, since the genius of the government repudiates this connection with the education of the country, and its past experience vindicates the general policy of holding the government aloof from all these internal affairs of the people, should this connection so complex and comprehensive be insisted upon? The truth is, it is an element of the European systems which is sought to be incorporated into our free institutions, and has no congeniality with the spirit and policy to which we are indebted for our present high national and social position.

This principle, which authorizes government to provide for the education of the people, founded as it is upon the general principle of its right to legislate in behalf of the positive interests of the people personally, revolutionizes the whole character of our government. It at once opens up to government, as a proper object of legislation, every variety of interest in which the people individually have concern, and introduces the dangerous principle that its own discretion is

the limit of the sphere of its legislative functions. If education is to be provided for by the State, because education generally diffused will promote the stability of the government and the progress of society, why may not religion be connected with the State, and its diffusion and maintenance be provided for by legislative enactment? Why may not agrarian laws be enacted, and any and all laws which a majority may conceive will be promotive of the happiness of the people? Indeed, there can be no avoiding the admission that the very same premises which are employed to establish the right and propriety of common school education by the State, are susceptible of being employed with no less logical certainty to establish the right and propriety of a connection of the State and the Church, and the legislation by the former for the maintenance and extension of the latter.

But it may be contended that the ground upon which the right of legislation by the State for the maintenance and diffusion of education is claimed, is not its mere tendency to promote the happiness of the people, as such, but its tendency, by its enlightening, elevating influence upon the people to promote their capacity for self-government, and, consequently, the stability and wise administration of the government itself. But is education the only interest that has such relation to the government? Is not Christianity an agency even more powerful in its conservative, happy influences upon the government? What more tends to promote the capacity for self-government, the love of order, the spirit of patriotism, and the wise conduct of public affairs, than the general prevalence of enlightened Christian principle? And what more tends to the stability of the government than the general contentment and prosperity of the people? The favorable influence, then, of any particular interest of society upon the government, as the ground of right for legislative interference for its promotion, will be found not to restrict government to

the one interference of providing for the education of the people, but to be a principle of sufficient comprehensiveness to embrace every interest with which the prosperity of society is connected. To what a latitudinarian policy, then, is the government committed by the adoption of the principle in question? In the maintenance of it, all restriction upon the government is virtually set aside, and it becomes, indeed, the convenient instrument of selfishness on the one hand, and on the other, of tyranny and abuse.

Should it be said that in assuming the right of the State to legislate for the education of the people, there is no intention to go further, and commit it to this general policy of interference with the individual interests of the people, and that, therefore, if it be an overstepping of the proper limits of republicanism, yet, being but one instance, it can have in no way any very modifying effect upon the genius of the government: it may be replied, that the intentions which exist in the mind of those who establish this precedent, can have but little influence upon those who may find the principle involved serviceable to their own personal interests. The principle once conceded, the question of its application is dependent only upon the caprice of the multitude, and inasmuch as there are not wanting, in the various operations of society, the constant occurrence of instances in which the selfishness, or the misguided feelings of men, may render it to them desirable to enjoy the advantages of government interposition, it is not likely that the application of the principle will continue to be held in the originally intended limits, but the likelihood rather is, that it will be gradually extended, until the result is reached of a government without restriction or limit. In government, principle is every thing; and if once departed from in any clear and well-defined instance, the guarantees are effectually lost of any further maintenance of it. The liability to this continued application of the principle of

governmental interference in the management of the personal interests of the people, when once conceded, is practically illustrated in States of our Union, where, in the instance of free schools, it has been practically adopted. And both philosophy and experience teach us, that if we would guard our liberties, and secure to the people the largest facilities for their own progress, we must be cautious of a surrender of all power not essentially protective and conservative, and especially of such as would be liable to such infinite injury and abuse.

But, in answer to all these views, it may be replied, that though, as a method for the diffusion of education, State agency is not the most eligible or the most efficient, nor is it, indeed, strictly accordant with republican ideas, yet it is in fact, the only practicable method—the only one likely to be attempted, and, therefore, though with all these encumbrances, its employment is both justified and demanded.

Now, we admit that, as long as the method by State agency is invariably set forth as the only eligible method, and is maintained as such in the popular mind, it will not be practicable to develop the method of spontaneous or voluntary agency—for the reason that, with this as the preconceived and accepted plan, the public mind will be diverted from all others, and likewise because of the tendency of human nature to adopt any method to reach a given result which promises the greatest relief from personal responsibility and trouble. But, supposing the method of State agency to be once discarded and no longer looked to in public estimation, we maintain that, in the progress of society, there would be educed every necessary provision for the widest diffusion of every necessary educational facility.

In our country the action of the government is *not* the action of the people. When the State, therefore, undertakes to provide for the general diffusion of education, it is but an

expression of the sentiment of the people already formed, as to their interest and obligation. Prior, therefore, to all State action in reference to this subject, there exists in the minds of the people a distinct conception of it, and of the responsibilities it devolves. We maintain, therefore, that the fact of the actual employment of State agency in behalf of education shows that there exists already in the popular mind every condition necessary to the provision of the scheme of popular education, and that, existing there consciously and actively, their development in actual, efficient methods does not depend upon the possibility of using the State as a medium, but, with necessary time, without this medium, in some spontaneous form, is necessary and inevitable.

Nor is the question of development, where the intellect and conscience of the people are properly awake to this subject, to be controlled by the consideration of dollars and cents. If government can command the means, as they come at last from the people, it is evident that the necessary means are among the people; and there is a progressive tendency in ideas of responsibility and interest of this kind, which, when once they get abroad in society, will, where the condition of that society is free and progressive, gradually accelerate their impelling power, until irresistibly they will bring into use whatever of means may be necessary to their practical execution and fulfillment.

It is evident, therefore, that in all society like ours, which admits of the free, expansive growth of ideas, that stage in the progress of it which demands the interposition of the State to provide for universal education, presupposes and implies, as necessary to it, the existence of a class of ideas and feelings among the people which, without the medium of the State, would, nevertheless, in time, develop themselves in a similar provision.

Moreover, on the plan of investing the Church with the

charge of this great interest, which is the policy we insist upon, in addition to the self-unfolding character of these ideas to which alone the adoption of the plan by the State is after all indebted, there will be, in the institution of the Church itself, an agency everywhere working to hasten the maturity of these ideas, and their exhibition in suitable practicable forms. So that, to the extent of the practical efficiency of the Church in the preparation of the mind and conscience of the people for adaptation to any legitimate course of action, when specifically and intentionally directed to it, will be, on this voluntary plan, the increased impulse given to all the spontaneous tendencies existing to these educational provisions. As long as the Church is ignored and rejected as the proper agency in the management of this interest, of course her power in the promotion of them will be but incidentally appreciated. But when she assumes the entire responsibility of its management, she becomes an active agency, through all her various modes of contact with the public mind, in the production and training of such public sentiment as any demands of this interest may require. While, therefore, the State agency plan depends upon a well-defined and active public sentiment, which must exist as necessary to its adoption, and which, for the reason that it finds a public expression in this mode, would, if this were rejected, ultimately adopt some other, the Church agency system has, in addition to it, upon which to rest all the subjective tendencies which itself has power to create and cultivate, and to this extent, therefore, has additional advantages for the proper preparation of the public mind for the desired result. The Church, when she thus lends herself actively to this interest, in addition to her capabilities to give impulse to those tendencies of a secular character upon which alone State agency relies, by her power to quicken and direct thought, she has power to arouse the conscience too, and to

bring it to bear, to hasten on, and render more certain the realization of the grand object. We maintain, therefore, as a conclusion fully made out, that without State agency, there will exist, not only all the public sentiment necessary to secure the provision of all the educational facilities required by the widest demands of society, but that, on the plan of voluntary agency, administered by the Church, such sentiment will be sooner elicited, more enlightened and thorough. It is idle to say that this sentiment, however fully elicited or fully defined, will need the assistance of the State to give it practical form and embodiment. The power of the government is but the power of the people at last; and in society like ours, free and untrammelled, the proverb, "where there is a will there is a way," is always susceptible of practical verification. There obtains in such society a law of logical succession and sequence. Prevailing ideas naturally and irresistibly evolve themselves in actual outward forms; and states of public consciousness, or more simply of public opinion, naturally express themselves in all such outward arrangements as are demanded by and adapted to them.

If it be asked that, if there are in society such spontaneous forces existing, as will, without the medium of the State, eventually manifest themselves in suitable educational provisions for the masses, why, in the progress of society, examples of such manifestation have not been seen: we reply that, under the prevailing notion of State agency, as the only practicable method, in all our communities, as soon as these forces have approximated the point of a suitable preparation of the public mind for action, the State has been seized upon as the medium to be used, and with this, as the universally accepted plan, the mind of the people has been diverted from all other methods. Time has never been given for spontaneous agency to find its own method of embodiment and expression, and the State plan absorbing the public mind, voluntary agencies,

and especially the Church, have not felt the responsibility of providing through its own machinery the methods of actual development.

The same general notion as to the exclusive jurisdiction of the government existed in a former period in respect of the higher departments of education also, and well-nigh all of the colleges of the country were indebted to the State for their origin and maintenance; but as society advanced, gradually the Church has awakened to a conception of her own responsibilities in this field, and through her agency colleges and high schools have been already everywhere voluntarily established, and a public sentiment is in progress which is destined to result in the subjection of the entire management of these higher educational interests to the spontaneous agencies of society. If the idea of common school education by the State could be discarded, a similar growth of public sentiment would occur in relation to this department, and the sphere of the educational function of the Church would be gradually extended until its provisions were adapted to every class, and fully met every demand of the entire country.

There is an impatience in the human mind which too often urges it forward to the accomplishment prematurely of grand results. There are always leading minds in every community, who, in advance of the general mind, are able to conceive of results whose realization throughout society they deem desirable, and without a philosophic appreciation of the importance of awaiting the progress of society,—and having these results to grow up, out of, and in harmony with its spontaneous forces, exhibiting themselves as the ripe fruit of these forces, brought forth and matured according to the natural laws of society—they bestir their energies to secure the adoption of arbitrary, empirical plans for their accomplishment. Such is the origin and such the character of the various systems of common school education by the State. They are the practical dis-

closure of a hasty, impatient public spirit, which if it had waited for proper growth and expansion, would have afterwards exhibited itself just as certainly, and at a time when it would have been a spontaneous outgrowth of society, and in perfect adaptation to all the laws regulating it. As it is, it is an empirical, arbitrary system, as all systems are, in free communities, which seek to manage private and personal interests by State rather than by spontaneous, voluntary agencies. Society, free and enlightened, is composed of individuals of active powers, and they must be prepared for any set of blessings before they can advantageously appropriate them, and that preparation will always be indicated by a general spontaneous movement to provide them. Coercive, arbitrary methods are premature and violative of the laws of social government. There is a principle of demand and supply in society, untrammelled by artificial, empirical restraints, which naturally regulates its own institutions and internal arrangements. And if government will agree to relinquish the subject of education to the Church, and so far countenance and support it, as to let it alone under the free, spontaneous promptings which in the order of progress its own internal agencies will evolve, the interests of education will be gradually extended and diffused until all the country will share its blessings, and that too, on such basis as harmonizing with the natural laws of society, they will be but the sequence of its own progress, and in agreement with every existing relation.

But if education, in this aggressive or benevolent feature of it, which looks to its diffusion, in some sense, among all classes—belongs not to the State, but like all its higher departments, is a function of the Church—we come now to the question, in what manner is the Church to fulfil its requirements, and thus complete her system of educational provision?

The objects to be provided for, under this aggressive or

benevolent feature of educational operation, as before classified, are, first, those who are indifferent to educational privileges from mere ignorance or indisposition; and, second, those who are denied these privileges from absolute poverty. Shall these be treated alike, and under a general system of free education, provided for by the Church, be secured the privileges of elementary education in common? or shall these be discriminated, and each be provided for on a basis separate and distinct?

The first is the method of the State, in many portions of the Union, and is the favorite method everywhere as predicated of State action. But considered as the method of the Church, which is the point of view from which we are now to regard it, we hold it radically objectionable, and for reasons which tend still farther to discredit any connexion of the State with the subject.

Any general method which embraced equally all who fall within these two classes, could not be restricted to them alone; but would necessarily, in its practical execution, likewise embrace many who, without this provision, would, on their own responsibility, avail themselves of the common educational facilities of the country, and who consequently, in the sense of either of these classes, do not need the application of this aggressive or benevolent educational function. The causes which would lead to this are such as arise from deeply laid principles of human nature, and from the difficulties that are inseparable from practical discrimination. And so necessarily does this result follow from this general method of treating the entire beneficiary class, that those States which have undertaken to provide for this class have not attempted the discrimination, but have boldly met the difficulty by assuming the free education of all classes, as well those who would be educated without such aid, as those who would not.

The objections to this blending of those who, without help,

would help themselves, and those properly the beneficiary classes, are several.

It introduces those into a general scheme of benevolence, as objects of it, who are not so in any true and proper sense—a state of things which, from the nature of the case, must work injuriously, both as to these objects themselves and the cause. Benevolence is necessarily misplaced when the objects of it do not properly come within its design, and the chances to secure benevolent coöperation are diminished when the scheme of its operations is clogged by the intermingling of objects not recognized as falling within its legitimate intention.

Again: while this blending of those not properly embraced within the beneficiary class, in this general aggressive scheme, does not really increase the number sharing the benefits of the educational function, since, without it, they would themselves seek them, and consequently does not really further educational interests, it increases the amount of benevolent effort demanded, complicates and extends the machinery of operations, and thereby tends to impair and defeat the whole scheme, as applicable to those, the proper objects of it.

Again: this general method, so far from benefitting those not of the beneficiary class included in it, absolutely tends, in reference to them, to lower the standard of education, and in many respects to diminish their advantages as compared with those they would enjoy under a system distinct and independent. Any general system, as this would be, covering a wide territory, in which every school is dependent upon the efficiency of the whole system, and in its management complicated with it, could not be so efficient as would schools which are independent and responsible only to local claims and influences. Admitting that it might create educational facilities in some places before destitute, yet in respect of those already existing, its tendency would be to depress. The effect, therefore,

would be to lower the general standard of education, in respect of those who, if they were not included in this general scheme, would be provided for in methods independent and correspondent with the capabilities of the country for enlargement and elevation. Individual enterprise, which has personal interest in view, will always reach a higher standard of attainment, when independent in its action, than when fettered by the connections of extended combination, and dependent upon the slow-moving machinery of wide and complicated system.

Moreover, in this general system, which has, as its primary object, the benefit of the strictly beneficiary classes, the energies of it must be directed to what are recognized as the primary or elementary departments of education, and under this restriction, necessarily, the more advanced departments will be less efficiently provided for and conducted than under the independent system, where schools are supplied, in kind and character, to meet the precise existing wants of communities. In education, as in all other general interests, the principle of distribution must obtain; and that system, which has for its fundamental object a wide diffusion of rudimental education, is not the best calculated to provide the more elevated and advanced. And those who desire the benefits of these higher departments ought to have them provided under a system independent, and which allows of any adaptation suitable to the wants of its patrons.

We maintain, therefore, that under a general method of free education, provided for the proper objects of benevolent exertion, those included in it not such objects would have fewer advantages for extended educational benefits than under a system allowing free scope for individual and local enterprise; and that any general system of free education, whether provided by the Church or State, necessarily has a depressing or restraining influence upon the general standard of academic education.

But conceding that the beneficiary class might be so separated as to allow of the application of benevolent educational effort exclusively to them, still we maintain that any general plan which provides education alike for them, without discrimination, is exceedingly objectionable.

The beneficiary classes, as before stated, are two—first, those who are able to pay for their education, but who fail to seek it of their own accord, by reason of ignorance or a want of appreciation of its value; and, second—those whose poverty denies them educational privileges. Now, the former class is large, varying in number in different localities; but the latter class, in respect of mere elementary education, and it is to this department we now refer, in this country, where opportunities of abundant livelihood are so favorable, are very small, especially outside of the cities. It follows, therefore, that under this plan of providing free education for both of these classes, by far the largest portion thus receiving their education, free of cost, will consist of those who are able to pay for it themselves.

Now, there are several objections to this provision of free education for those who do not need it.

It removes from parents and persons, generally, of this rank in life, the chief incentives to industry and thrift. The progress and prosperity of society depends very much upon the strength and variety of the motives which operate upon its different classes to self-improvement and elevation. Hence, the great value of republican government, since the freedom which it secures leaves society in that condition to be accessible to the greatest number of motives to enterprise and improvement. Among these motives, the most pervading and powerful is the desire to improve the condition and to promote the happiness of offspring. Its influence is powerful, and so ramifies the operations of society, that if its effects were blotted out, it would leave society deprived of what now

most constitutes both its conservative and aggressive elements.

But what if it were a regulation of society that all were necessarily to be educated, and that the question of the ability of parents to educate their own was in no wise a part of the plan; but that mere inactivity toward this result was sufficient to insure, in their behalf, an application of the educational function, free of cost, to what an extent would it diminish the motives to action growing out of parental affection and relationship; and how paralyzing the influence upon the energies, the enterprise, the industry and thrift of the people; and what a prolific source it would become of indolence and prodigality. Its effect would be not only to prevent the emergence of many, now so far depressed, as to be unable themselves liberally to educate their offspring, to the position in which they would be able to accomplish this result, but likewise absolutely to extend and multiply the number now in that depressed condition.

But if education thus was necessarily to be extended to all, and mere apparent indisposition to it would secure it free of cost, its effect would still farther be to cause many who otherwise would, at their own expense, educate their children, purposely to assume such an attitude as to claim and enjoy this gratuitous benefit, and thus to discourage and forestall the spontaneous, active impulses of the people to seek out and appropriate for themselves the benefits of education.

So disastrous would be the influence upon society by this destructive effect upon a motive which underlies so many of its greatest excellences and highest achievements, that the blessings of this extension of education would be a poor compensation, indeed, even if such a sacrifice were indispensable to secure them. Society always makes an unwise bargain whenever she exchanges any principle of free, spontaneous development, especially when that development is of resources.

and interests that are vital and precious, for the sake of any good, however attractive and promising. The policy itself is fundamentally wrong. Society gains—advances by spontaneous internal growth, rather than by accretion. Hers is an endogenous rather than an exogenous nature, and her resources are strengthened by influences that vitalize and expand her internal capabilities, rather than by such accumulations as come from forces without. These accumulations, however desirable, as the product of internal forces, when thus derived from without, indicate nothing as to real character, and only serve to impede and destroy the genuine resources within.

But society is not reduced to this alternative of the abandonment of this conservative and yet progressive principle, or of failure in the realization of this universal diffusion of education. It is competent for her, as we shall presently see, to provide the means which shall not only leave this principle free to develop itself, free to confer its fullest blessings, but shall, indeed, incorporate it as the basis of their own action, by which, at last, this precious boon shall be everywhere diffused.

But this system, which proposes to extend aid to a class in respect of that in which they can help themselves, is objectionable on other grounds.

Blessings cheaply obtained are never adequately prized, and the want of this appreciation is always in the inverse ratio of the magnitude of these blessings. Nature recognizes this law in that other law of general application, which annexes labor, and toil, and sacrifice, as the condition to the attainment of all grand results. This principle alone would condemn this system. Indeed, education, coming gratuitously to those who are able to pay for it, at once excites suspicion as to its value. Men who are accustomed to receive favors only in consideration of an equivalent given, very naturally acquire the habit of estimating the value of things

by their cost; and therefore very naturally consider this of little worth, which, though they have the ability, they are not required to pay for it.

Again: When men pay for their advantages, they are stimulated to improve them, by the consideration of the sacrifice they make to obtain them. But when education is thus free, this incentive is not enjoyed, and there is a corresponding diminution in the amount of benefit realized.

The very commonness of educational privileges, without these means of cultivating ideas of their importance, tends to foster a spirit of carelessness and indifference to them. And if men are prompted to avail themselves of these gratuitous advantages, they will not be apt to provide for themselves very extensively such as require pecuniary outlay. Now, though there are supernatural agencies engaged in the prosecution of the gospel mission, still its plan embraces the principle of its support by the individual contributions of those who enjoy it—a feature established, no doubt, in view of these general principles of human nature, and should teach the lesson of the folly of the policy which attempts the gratuitous bestowment of great blessings.

But if this free or gratuitous policy thus injures the cause of education by its unfavorable action upon the views and impulses of those who are to share it, it has a no less unhappy influence upon the educational agencies themselves. When education is paid for by those who receive it, parents are careful and watchful of the advantages afforded, and the success of teachers, as to the profits of their labor, therefore, is in proportion to the effort and ability they put forth. There is, accordingly, a constant direct stimulus afforded to give the highest efficiency to the schools of the country. But when education is free, the same incentives to watchfulness by parents not being felt, the teachers themselves are without these motives to energy and effort: their care and diligence

are proportionably relaxed, and of course the schools are less efficiently and usefully conducted.

But this system is further objectionable, because it proposes to accomplish at once, by arbitrary means, what ought to be brought about gradually as the result of the quickened, spontaneous forces themselves of society. Now, universal education is a great achievement, but it should be looked to not as one of those results which at any time may be forced upon society ; but rather as a grand consummation, to which all the forces of society are tending, and which is to be reached as the fruit of a certain stage of growth ; and which, when that stage is arrived at, comes out naturally as a necessary and inevitable sequence. When results are thus realized, as the gradual development of internal active agencies, and not by an arbitrary system forced upon classes of men in passive attitude, necessarily there is a general preparation for these results : the whole frame-work of society, in all its parts, has become so moulded as to assume an adaptation to them : they come, therefore, naturally, in conformity to the laws of social progress, and society is not only in a condition to experience them without violence to any of its internal relations, but to appropriate them, and to enjoy the full measure of their benefits. The tree is fully matured, and the time for fruit-bearing has come ; and though, by a dwarfing, stunting process, fruit defective and imperfect may have sooner appeared, yet now it appears all perfect and entire, and without detriment to any interest involved. It is unphilosophic—it is empirical—to maintain that universal education is necessarily a blessing. When the result of a forcing, arbitrary process, it is an evil—an evil proportionably great, according to the relative number in society who, without this process, would remain destitute of education. New England, and the Northern States generally, which have adopted this arbitrary plan, have felt this evil. Restlessness,

fanaticism, ultraism, and many other ills, are the fruitful consêquences of it; and its effects would have been felt much more perniciously, but for the influx of foreign population, which, among the evils that have been entailed by their introduction, have subserved one good purpose, in that they have tended to keep up that equipoise in the frame-work of society necessary to that stage of its progress now existing there, and which this common-school system constantly tends to destroy. The time will come when, in the North as well as in the South, universal education will be desirable, and when it will be realized without this forcing system; but it will be when the masses of society, under its own progressive agencies, have so moved upward in regular gradation, as that, while all these gradations now existing are still maintained, yet all are so far elevated as to require that even the lowest, to fit it for its own sphere, shall be imbued with some of the elements of literary education. This time will come, for progress is the law of society, so free and untrammelled as ours; and when it arrives, universal education will be a simultaneous achievement—a sequence natural and implied. And while this grand consummation will be an index of this high stage of progress, it will become an incorporated element of yet higher and accelerated future advancement.

It is, then, by some system which operates as a quickener of internal, spontaneous agencies, and contributes to their unfolding, and not by that which arbitrarily provides for the immediate attainment of the result, that we conform to the social law of God in bringing about universal education, and should seek to realize this great end; and because this system in question is not of this kind, but precisely the other, we regard it radically objectionable.

But we are opposed to this system because, in respect of this largest division of the beneficiary class, it provides help which is not needed. They are able to pay for education,

consequently, whatever other advantages they need to secure their education, they do not need that it be furnished them free of cost. It follows, therefore, that in so far as any system provides this class with gratuitous education, it helps them in respect of that they have the ability to help themselves—in short, it affords them help they do not need. To say nothing of the superfluous effort, trouble, and expense to which this subjects the benevolent function, the principle itself is wrong and hurtful. It is a safe principle, that in all efforts to improve and elevate men, no more external effort should be used, no more machinery should be employed, than is necessary in respect to those acted upon to bring into use and make active the capabilities they already enjoy. The policy should be to have men to help themselves as far as possible, and no more aid should be given than is necessary to remove insuperable difficulties, and to enable those sought to be benefitted to work out for themselves their own improvement. Any thing more than this tends to destroy both self-respect and self-reliance, and to preclude that spirit of enterprise and energy inseparable from all elevated and useful character. It is a principle in physiology that any artificial aid rendered to any functions of the body, by which their own natural exercise is prevented or superseded, will eventually weaken those functions and vitiate the condition of the whole system. The same principles obtain in respect of other powers of man, whether considered in themselves or in their external bearings. Any arrangement of society which supercedes the active use of capabilities and means which men already enjoy, has a general enfeebling influence, and precludes the healthy, vigorous development of many of the most important resources. The entire tendency is to enfeeble character, to multiply indigence, and thus to increase the demands for benevolent effort. Man must be treated as a being of active powers—as susceptible of improvement and

elevation only by the development of resources already imbedded within him. And instead of creating help for him wherein he can help himself, and thereby weakening him, the policy should be to recognize his own resources, and to provide for him only that which, in connection with the entire use of all he has within himself, will be necessary to accomplish the intended result. Any system of education, therefore, proper to the beneficiary classes, ought to avail itself of whatever of means may already exist among that class, and provide by its own active agency only so much as may be necessary to supplement those means; and because this system of providing gratuitous education for the largest portion of that class transcends this limit, we regard it injudicious and objectionable.

The conclusion then we consider safely arrived at, that in providing for the education of the beneficiary class, the Church ought not to treat the two divisions of which that class is composed alike, by adopting for both a general system of free education, but that, in its general plan, these two should be discriminated and provided for in methods distinct and peculiar.

In stating the method proper to each division, we notice, first, that which should be adopted for the largest, *viz.*, those who have ability to pay for education, but who are prevented from becoming the active seekers of it, by ignorance or want of appreciation of it.

Now, any method of sufficient comprehensiveness and vigor to meet all the wants of this class, scattered as they are over the wide extent of our entire territory, and in great diversity of condition, must necessarily embrace several distinct features.

Prevented as they are by ignorance, and not by want of pecuniary ability, from such active steps as will enable them to provide, of their own accord, their own educational facili-

ties, it is evident that any instrumentality that will tend to remove that ignorance and awaken a sense of the value of education, will constitute an important element in any general system for the education of this class. These people have the love of offspring, the susceptibilities of pride and ambition, and all the latent impulses of our common nature to improvement and elevation; and could proper ideas be infused and their intellects be aroused to a consideration of the advantages of education, naturally and necessarily they would be stimulated to seek out for themselves educational privileges.

The proper development of the higher educational establishments of the country will contribute much to the removal of this ignorance, and to the spread of enlightened views in respect of this general subject. In proportion as these are rendered active in the multiplication of educated men throughout the country, the opportunities of perceiving the benefits of education will be diffused. Every rightly educated man is a centre of light as to the value of education, in the community in which he lives, both in his example and through his active efforts. And in respect of the ignorant class, he furnishes an argument and illustration upon this subject, the most of all potent, since they are ocular and tangible, requiring for their appreciation no effort of reasoning, but only that of simple perception. As these then are multiplied, the ideas of education's benefits are extended, ignorance is dispersed, and the number of those desiring educational privileges is constantly increased. Indeed, this is the most natural method of diffusing education. Light naturally comes from above. And this principle of descent in the diffusion of all the higher interests of the mind, is not only the most natural, but the most safe, as to the organism of society.

But, in addition to this active agency thus exerted in the spread of enlightened views as to the value of education

among the humbler classes, their necessary effect is to multiply the number of teachers of the country, who, in obtaining employment for themselves, in many ways awaken a demand and inspire an interest among these classes in behalf of education. They are, indeed, the active agents in behalf of education, ramifying the country every where, arousing the people to a sense of its claims, and of their interest in respect of it.

A thoughtful examination of the history of these establishments will show their potency, as enlighteners of the public mind of every class, and will disclose ample ground of assurance that time and patience would render these alone a sufficient instrumentality for such preparation as the masses need, to render them the spontaneous seekers of their own education.

It constitutes, then, an additional reason for the full employment of the higher educational function, that it sustains so important a relation to the great question of the age, the universal diffusion of some measure of literary education.

But as the entire business of education in all its departments, falls within the Church, it is her duty so to expand her system as to fulfil its entire requirements; and, consequently, it devolves upon her not to depend for this enlightening result, if any thing more certain can be done, upon mere incidental effects. What arrangement then could she make by which to bring her agencies specifically to bear upon this prevailing ignorance, and render herself directly to this class an enlightener in respect of the claims of education?

The Church forms herself, in her organic capacity, into a Missionary Society and into a Sunday-school Society; and these are found to subserve valuable purposes, as furnishing the necessary machinery for their maintenance and prosecution. Let her form herself into an educational union with reference to the general management of the entire subject of

education. It would not be difficult to show the important service such an organism might render in the establishment and maintenance of the higher educational interests of the country. Indeed, the Church will never advance to the point of proper apprehension of her relation to the educational function, or unfold the method of her suitable action with reference to it, until some such plan is adopted. Let it be the policy of these Church educational unions to divide each State into as many districts as may be practicable, and to appoint to each of these one or more persons qualified by suitable experience and mental gifts, whose duty it shall be to supervise, in their respective districts the general subject of education, especially in its relations to the humbler class—to acquaint themselves with the condition and wants of this class—to go among them in the dark corners of the country, and by suitable lectures, and, as far as possible, by familiar interviews, to enlighten their views, multiply their ideas, and instruct them as to the importance of self-culture and educational attainment. In addition, let it be understood that educational interests, especially in their relation to the beneficiary classes that lie within his own field of labor, falls within the sphere of the preacher's duties, and that among other duties, he shall preach and lecture; and converse in all sections of his work in reference to educational claims, and become an active agency in respect of these humbler classes, especially to enlist them in the cause of their own education.

Now, what an enlightening influence a system of this kind could exert upon the popular mind, in reference to the general subject of education! It would be a positive agency—ramifying the whole country—bringing to bear the combined energies of the entire Church upon the great result of awakening the people of every grade to its just appreciation. For when thus recognized and provided for by the ministry, the very relation they sustain as the leaders of all Church enter-

prise, would not fail to secure the general coöperation of the membership in behalf of the appointed result; and with these enlisted in the general scheme, no arrangement could be more complete for its successful accomplishment.

But if, in this age of impatience, society cannot await the slow effects of the higher educational establishments, although, if time be allowed them, their inevitable tendency would be to work out the desired end of universal education, neither, perhaps, would it be content with this limitation of the operations of the Church, as effective as they would be in hastening this result. It devolves upon the Church, therefore, in addition to these enlightening, persuasive instrumentalities, to incorporate such features as will give to her system a more aggressive character, and make it the positive instrument for providing education for the beneficiary classes.

To secure this active element, let it be an additional feature in the plan of this Church educational union, that each preacher's circuit or station be formed into a subordinate or auxiliary Church union, the members of which shall themselves, or by committee, constitute agents, whose business it shall be in coöperation with, or under the general direction of the preachers and district agents, to visit the various destitute neighborhoods, and interest the people in the formation of schools—to seek out teachers for them—furnish advice as to details in respect of suitable sites for school houses, of the methods of combination and concert, and in every prudent way, under the guidance of genuine Christian benevolence, point out the way and provide the necessary facilities by which they, in the use of their own resources, might establish for themselves such schools as are suitable to their circumstances and wants. In addition, it might be another feature of these auxiliary educational unions, where the circumstances of its members would justify it, to provide, by regular collections, a fund to be used for defraying, in part, the salaries of

teachers, so that in those neighborhoods where the people were the least able to pay their teachers, they might be induced the more readily to respond to these efforts by some partial assistance rendered. This policy is recommended, furthermore, by the practical evidence it would furnish of disinterestedness and true kindness; and its tendency, therefore, to remove from the mind of the beneficiary distrust and suspicion.

To awaken interest—to stimulate exertion—and to afford increased light—these subordinate unions might appoint annually, or semi-annually, visitors to these various schools, especially on occasions of their examinations, to afford countenance, and, if deemed proper, to address the people on the claims of education. They might appoint annual celebrations, to be held at eligible places, in which all the schools within their respective jurisdictions, either in mass or by representatives, would be embraced, and at which the district agent should be present, and addresses be delivered suitable to the enlightenment of the people and their enlistment in the cause of education.

Now, it is not contended that a system so broad and replete with details, could at once be practically developed, and put every where in the most efficient and successful operation. The Church has no power of compulsory process by which to coerce her membership into enterprises of this kind, and secure vigor and faithfulness in their prosecution. Still it is the business of the Church, with enlarged and enlightened views, to comprehend the entire sphere of her proper action, and to arrange her machinery with reference to it. And though difficulties may exist, and time may be required to set in motion every department of that machinery, and to enable it to realize the total of the objects for which it was constructed, yet she is not to be deterred by this consideration, but only to derive from it reasons for increased diligence

and energy in its arrangement and management. There is a vitalizing property inherent in every true Church, which tends to impart an aggressive capability to all the various schemes which her own legitimate functions demand. Moreover, in respect of this particular system, the constant appliances of enlightenment and incentive, its own mechanism is perpetually bringing to bear, the knowledge of experience, and the experience of success, all constitute so many active influences for its full expansion, and its prosecution to the speedy realization of its intended results. In general, the Church needs only to be properly enlightened in respect of any line of conduct proper to be pursued, that her own spontaneous energies may prompt to its successful pursuance. But this system, recognized and adopted as the policy of the Church, will, itself, at once tend to educate the Church as to her duty in these premises, and every step in its progress, while it will tend to increase the general enlightenment, will, by the increased confidence it will impart, embolden and stimulate the Church to yet more active zeal and vigorous enterprise. However far, then, this system, in the outset may come short of the fullest success, or unpromising it may seem to be, still it has embraced within it all the provision necessary to meet the great objects had in view, and will, if time be allowed, ultimately exhibit itself in all the proportions necessary to complete adaptation and fullest efficiency.

This system, as the plan of the Church, is further recommended by several considerations. First: it will put the selection of teachers for these common schools, to a large extent, in the hands of the Church. By this result, these schools, to that extent, will be saved from such teachers as would antagonize the interests of Christianity, and means will be afforded the Church of subjecting these schools to her own uses. Second: it will, by placing these schools directly under the auspices and fostering care of the Church, increase

her influence over those sharing their benefits, and thereby multiply the friends and the subjects of Christianity. Third: it will furnish to Christians a field for the exercise of benevolence and zeal, and, indeed, all the various qualities which belong to a full Christian experience. In this way its reflex influence will be admirable, tending to such cultivation and enlargement as is implied in a growing progressive piety.

But in reference to many portions of our country, there is for any thing like any very considerable extension of school privileges among the ignorant and humble, a very great lack of teachers, so that, whatever might be the perfection of the machinery otherwise, it would be, until some provision is made for the supply of that lack, inadequate to accomplish its intended object. Indeed, it is not too much to say that if there were enough of that class constantly provided in the country, there would be nothing more wanted to secure such constant extension of school privileges over the land, as would in time result in the attainment of the object aimed at—their universal diffusion throughout the entire country. They themselves would effect what we contend is the only thing this first division of the beneficiary class need to have done in their behalf. Their multiplication would make it necessary that they should not limit their efforts to obtain patronage to those more advanced portions of community which themselves already desire and seek for teachers,—but, in regard to many, that they should go out into all sections where children are to be found, and by their own exertions create and organize demand for education. These, then, in themselves would constitute an aggressive agency, and just such as the beneficiary class need, that they may be so enlightened and stimulated, as that they, on their own accord, may be prompted to avail themselves of educational privileges. If society could be patient, this method would of itself in time secure the desired result, and secure it in

harmony with natural law and the established principles of social progress. It could not, it is true, compass the entire object at once, but it contains the element of expansion and progress. Every step would but open the way for farther and accelerated movement, and time would give it the impulse and facilities of a complete system for the universal education of the people.

A provision, then, for an increase of teachers, is necessary in any plan for the education of the beneficiary classes. And here we find an additional consideration in favor of that benevolent feature, which we have maintained to be important as connected with our higher educational establishments. Teaching, as an employment which may be rendered most readily available for pecuniary gain, is the business to which most young men betake themselves who, without means themselves, have been educated as beneficiaries. Whatever, then, benevolence does in affording collegiate education gratuitously, for the most part, contributes to the increase of the supply of teachers; and it might make this result certain by imposing it as a condition that those sharing it should devote their time, or some prescribed portion of it, to the business of teaching. It is, then, by the extension of the benevolent feature, as connected with our higher educational institutions, that teachers are to be multiplied. The denominational colleges of the country, by the peculiar relation they sustain to the poorer classes, through their relations to the Church, and in virtue of the aims of usefulness, under which they are conducted, are already contributing largely to supply this public want. And it is a consideration in proof of the suitability of the Church as the proper agency in the conduct of the educational interests of society, that these, her own institutions, have peculiar efficiency in accomplishing this result. But the Church has ample ability, by suitable endowments, to extend the benevolent operations of our higher

institutions of learning, and, consequently, to multiply teachers to any extent demanded. Let her arouse herself to this enterprise—let her direct herself to the attainment of this result. All her efforts and all the efforts of the country to accomplish the education of this beneficiary class are vain without it, but with it she has already fulfilled every condition necessary to its attainment; and whatever else she might do would not be necessary as a requisite to success, but at best would only contribute to hasten that which already would be inevitable.

Taking, then, all these various elements together, as constituting the proper plan in behalf of that portion of the beneficiary class who themselves are able to pay for their education, they embrace every provision necessary to secure the education of that class—indeed, they afford them every possible assistance to this end, without transcending the limits in which assistance is a blessing—every possible aid, save that of making the proffered boon an entire gratuity. First, the negative effect is secured of the removal of the chief hinderances—ignorance and supineness—and, Second, the positive effect of actually rendering every assistance required to put them in the way to make their own resources available and sufficient for the attainment of the desired results.

A system thus comprehensive and wisely adapted lacks nothing, if faithfully executed, to work out the necessary education and elevation of this class of the people, and upon such principles as do no violence to the necessary and natural laws of society. When put fully into execution, every step of its progress but accelerates the process. The education of one individual of this class provokes another to use the means to attain the like blessing. The education of one neighborhood—of one community—awakens attention to this subject in other neighborhoods and communities, and thus

every achievement made but extends and invigorates the capabilities of the enterprise, until, finally, its own success will in itself afford every needed resource and facility for its own universal success, and the grand result will be reached of the education of all the people.

But if this be the method proper to provide for the education of the first division of the beneficiary class, what now is the method suitable to secure the same to the other division, *viz.*, those who are denied the privileges of education from actual pecuniary destitution?

Now, we maintain that if this method we have specified as appropriate for the first class were put in execution and faithfully prosecuted, in most neighborhoods there would be none found in this second class, and in any neighborhood the number would be exceedingly small. For, while from the abundance of the means of livelihood in our own happy country, the number of this class, under any circumstances, is very limited, the generally improved condition of the humbler classes, the result of the operation of this plan for their relief would so diffuse a spirit of self-respect, of thriftiness and enterprise, that, with the facilities in reach of all, but few would be left in a condition helpless and dependent. Under this plan, by which schools are everywhere brought to the doors of the people, many of those now thought to be entirely destitute, would manage to educate, at their own expense, their children; and when the plan had time fully to bring forth its fruits this number would be found to be so great as to leave but few any where unembraced.

Still, it is true that after this plan had fully unfolded all its capabilities, there would be found those who were denied educational advantages by reason of destitution. It is easy to see, however, that, under the plan of subordinate or auxiliary educational unions, every necessary provision for the elementary education of this class is entirely practicable.

How easy would it be to devise the necessary methods of ascertaining by actual inspection the number of those belonging to this class, within the limits of the jurisdiction of each of these unions; and then, if the benevolence of the Church were properly enlisted, to raise a fund to be appropriated, under the supervision of these agencies, to meet the expenses requisite to their elementary education. Nowhere would the drafts upon the pecuniary aid of the Church be sufficient to make them a heavy tax. The object is entirely feasible, and system, under the guidance of prudence and benevolence, is alone necessary triumphantly to achieve it. And what a noble field for the expansion and cultivation of the benevolence and zeal of the Church is presented by such a plan of usefulness! This view alone would point out this plan as proper to be seized upon by the Church, and would recommend it as the true course to accomplish this desired result. Oh, if the Church understood her true interests, and the proper methods for the development of her piety, she would away with this dependence upon State agency and secular combination to achieve these results of good, as so many hinderances to her own full and free expansion, and would at once, on her own responsibility, address herself to them as her own legitimate objects, rejoicing in that economy of God which opened them up to her, as a furnished theatre for the cultivation and display of her own virtues, and the abundant occasion of her own enlargement and progress.

In what we have said thus far, we have discriminated the two divisions of the beneficiary class, and have confined ourselves to a specification of the method proper to each; but there is another agency which, if suitably employed, might be found in itself sufficient to meet all the claims of this entire class, and, when used in conjunction with the other agencies, would contribute greatly to their success. We mean the Sunday-school system. We speak of it now as disso-

ciated from its immediate religious purposes and bearings, and with exclusive reference to its effect as an instrument for the diffusion of elementary education. Experience has abundantly demonstrated its competency to this result. Thousands of our own land have learned to read through no other aid than such as it furnished ; and if this were generally recognized as one of its functions, and it were specifically directed in its management to its accomplishment, it might be made to achieve results in behalf of the elementary education of the beneficiary class that would justify the erection of it into one of the chief instrumentalities of the Church for the general diffusion of education. It is a system capable of unlimited expansion. The history of the Sunday-school Unions of the Church demonstrates the practicability of the extension of the Sunday-school system into every precinct of the Church's jurisdiction. Let the Church, then, be awake to this particular capability of the Sunday-school, and let her incorporate this instrumentality into her system for the accomplishment of the great object before her—the general diffusion among the humbler classes of some measure of literary education.

In the extended scheme which we have thus unfolded, as embracing what is necessary to the development of the educational function of the Church, it will be seen that there is a mutual dependence of parts, whereby the development of one tends to bring out and promote the efficiency of all the rest. It is a system made up of parts so involved and compacted together, that, while the absence of one necessarily impairs the action of all the rest, the existence and proper action of each enhances the vigor and energy of the whole. The Church, then, can do justice to no one department of her educational interests until she completes the entire sphere of her educational objects. Her colleges and universities are unfurnished with the means to achieve their fullest re-

sults of good, whatever else they may enjoy, until the academies of the country, preparatory to, and the feeders of them, are themselves placed upon the right basis with respect both to their modes of instruction and their modes of discipline; and these last themselves are fostered and promoted by that general scheme which brings every mind within the sphere of educational provision. While, then, to compass every end which the educational function of the Church contemplates, a system less comprehensive is insufficient, the highest success of any one of the departments of education no less requires the practical unfolding of the entire system. Hence the importance of enlarged and liberal views in respect of educational enterprise. There is danger in some sections—and the history of education in the Northern States illustrates it—that the idea of diffusion, as represented in the system for the masses, will overbear and shut out the idea of elevation, as represented in the colleges and universities. On the other hand, there is danger that exclusive concentration of attention and energy upon the higher educational establishments, will involve a neglect of those subordinate institutions, no less necessary to the complete development of any adequate educational system. The Church should expand her views, and, rightly comprehending the full extent of her relations, and the mutual dependence of all the departments of her enterprise, should give that attention to each and all necessary to their proper relative unfolding, and their well-balanced, harmonious action. The multiplication of rival schools, within judicious limits, furnishes no just occasion of suspicion and jealousy. Education evolves education. The prosperity of one occasions the means of the prosperity of others. Every properly conducted school is a light whose beneficial influence is not bounded by the limits of its own patronage; but goes out into other circles, and creates influence and support in behalf of similar enterprises elsewhere.

Happily, then, for the cause of education, there is not only, as between its different departments, but as between separate interests of the same department, an inter-action and mutual dependence, whose tendency it is to elicit in all enlarged and expansive feelings of good-will and support, and mutually to enlist and combine all of every section in behalf of the interests of education wherever found.

But if it be the business of the Church to arrange for and conduct the training of the rising generation, it is not enough that she provides the amplest facilities for mere literary education, even though these be connected with every possible agency that would give them a religious direction and influence. The spiritual character of the Church, as well as that of her true objects, requires that she should not stop with this, but should, in addition, adopt the means for the direct religious culture of the young, and their embracement, as far as may be, within the fold of God.

Indeed, no Church organization, however efficient and successful in some departments, can be said to embrace all the functions of a true and properly constituted Church, which does not afford specific provision for the religious culture of the young. If, while under all the disabilities of protracted rebellion, of inveterate vicious habit, and matured sinful propensity, the adult class is to be sought out everywhere as the objects of Christian solicitude and care, surely the young, who sustain to us the relation of dependence, whose moral condition justifies the expectation of far greater success in efforts to elevate and save them, should be specially embraced, as even the most important class to be provided for in the great scheme of Church aggression. Are the souls of youth, as youth, less valuable than those of mature men? Is the kingdom of Christ—the great plan of human redemption—less concerned about the young than the old? How, then, can a Church, which restricts her energies to the adult por-

tion of the human family, leaving the young, embracing, as they do, so large a portion of human society, unaddressed and unprovided for as to any agencies of directly religious intent, claim to meet all its requirements to fulfill even its highest functions?

The experience of the Church and any just consideration of the relations of mind and character to the gospel system abundantly show that Christian effort among the young is everywhere most successful; and so far forth, consequently, as onward progress in the empire of Christianity is desirable, and to be looked to in the operations of the Christian Church, the youth of the land must be specially embraced among the prominent objects to which the aggressive energies of the Church are devoted. And if, as in some communities of our country, the ratio of the unconverted is so great as to claim a direction of energy mainly to the adult classes, yet there are many sections in which the field for expansion lies almost exclusively among the young.

In many communities the number of those in mature life without the Church is comparatively so small, and those thus left, the consequence of their protracted resistance to the calls of the gospel, offer so little ground of hope of future repentance, that the period has arrived in those communities at which, for the enlargement of the Church, her attention must be given chiefly to the rising generation. Important, then, at all times and in all places, as is that function of the Church which looks to the religious wants of the young, the time has come in many sections when the Church will be shorn of her greatest glory—her aggressive capabilities—unless she arouses herself to more enlarged, more systematic, and more zealous efforts in behalf of the religious training of her youth.

But if that function of the Church, which has for its object aggression, imperatively demands adequate provision for the religious training of the young, as one of the leading ob-

jects of the Church, the same provision is no less demanded by that other function which looks to the elevation and improvement of the Church itself. That instability and vacillation which has ruined many who began well, and furnished a captious, infidel world so much occasion of unjust, abusive remark—that ignorance and error, which now so much repress the energies of the Church, and so often exhibit themselves disastrously in the moral aspects of society—that prevailing want of such enlargement and enlightenment of view as is necessary to the manifestation in all ranks of the Church of the highest style of Christianity—will ever remain characteristics of the Christian Church, until the period shall have arrived in which it is mainly constituted of those who, from earliest childhood having been the objects of Church instruction, in youth submitted themselves to God and his cause. A thoughtful examination will disclose that most of the shortcomings and positive defects which are to be observed as existing generally, or in particular cases, in the Christian Church, whether as pertaining to opinion or practice, results from the fact, that the Church, as at present constituted, is chiefly composed of those who in youth were not afforded the needful facilities for religious instruction. In the nature of things, the Christian Church can never become adequately enlightened, thoroughly pure, and commensurate in her labors and enterprise with the full measure of her responsibilities, until her members are mostly those who, from early life, as the result of thorough religious training, have given themselves to the cause of God. The early indoctrination of the mind into religious truth—the early imbueing of the heart with religious tastes and spirit—the auxiliaries of habit and culture established in the morning of life—the freedom of the life from any experience of the corrupting, blighting influence of guilt—are indispensable to constitute a membership thoroughly enlightened, and consequently with principles so estab-

lished and abiding as to secure an obedience spontaneous and universal in every department of Christian obligation.

Such being the relation sustained by the great subject of the religious training of youth to the proper growth of Christianity in individuals and society, there never has been a time when that subject had a greater practical importance, and deserved in higher degree the consideration of the friends of the gospel.

There may have been a time when, from the difficulties which environed the Church, it was enough that the mere rudiments of Christianity were maintained in the heart—when it was enough that in matters of the Church the mere outlines of a full Christian life could be traced—when the ideas of improvement and elevation were lost in those of aggression and diffusion; but such in our times have been the conquests of Christianity, and such the variety of interests and responsibilities which the proper maintenance and care of those involved—such have been the spread of intelligence and the demands for a higher standard of rectitude—that now, as well that the Church may be able to avail herself of her advantages to push forward her victories, as that she may be able to maintain before the world that position of purity, and knowledge, and zeal, necessary to protect her from reproach, and to secure her the enjoyment of her rightful power, the great work is rather that of self-improvement, a development of the various elements of subjective Christianity which exhibit themselves in consistent life, enlarged and liberal spirit, and works of constant enterprising usefulness—results which, in the nature of things, can never be realized, until the Church is constituted of those in whom the principles were broadly laid in the season of youth.

The practicability of successful effort in conferring benefit in the season of youth, through a system of religious instruction, should settle the question of the duty of the Church to

provide amply and liberally such instruction. They are in our midst, and dependent upon us : they are soon to take our places on the great theatre of public action, and the fortunes of the Church are then to be placed in their hands. Every consideration of love for our posterity, of philanthropy and of patriotism—every motive of love to our Saviour and gratitude to God—urge us to make them, from the earliest moment, the objects of special religious effort, and to adjust the great system of our operations with specific reference to their religious care.

The world may urge, as it sometimes does, the propriety of leaving youth free from religious bias, that in mature years they may be untrammelled in their decisions upon religious truth ; but the Christian Church, which appreciates the hazard of such abandonment in so impressible a season, which estimates the value of immortal souls, and intelligently regards the future fortunes of the Church, can be influenced by no such cowardly, infidel spirit.

But if the religious training of the young is thus a proper function of the Church, it is the Sunday-school system which constitutes the grand machinery by which it is executed. Parents and individuals generally may do much on their own responsibility to further these ends, and incidentally all the various instrumentalities of the gospel may be made to contribute to them. Indeed, through these agencies alone, results of good in behalf of the rising generation may be achieved, of which the Church thus far has had no adequate conception, but to which, for the full occupancy of her sphere of action, it becomes her to be awakened. But, still, it is in the Sabbath-school system that the Church, as such, finds her leading agency for impressing herself upon the rising generation.

The various advantages which this system secures are briefly these :

1. It brings the youth of the country from the earliest practicable moment into direct and intimate association with the Church—encompasses them within her pale, and identifies them with her arrangements and operations. How effectual the means to shut out the corrupting influences of the world—to forestall sinful control and pollution, and to preoccupy the young mind with ideas and tastes in harmony with the Church, and congenial with the spirit of Christianity. These are circumstances in which the soil of the mind receives its most favorable adaptation to the future growth of Christianity—in which nature itself is divested of its chiefest antagonisms to godliness, and is moulded to its nearest possible approximation to the scheme of piety.

2. It engages the wisdom and energies of the Church in the indoctrination of the youthful mind in religious truth, and the storing of it with religious ideas by direct effort—by the circulation of a literature suitable to their years and wants—by personal example and influence, by which they are saved from the damaging effect of error, and are established in their acceptance of the truth of the Bible, and by which a groundwork is laid for the play of the saving forces of the gospel, and qualifications are secured for a piety in future enlightened and consistent.

3. It brings the youth of the country into personal religious relations with the older, in consequence of which the latter give more attention to them, and feel a deeper interest in them, and are more constantly prompted to provide the means and to employ the effort necessary to promote their welfare and save their souls. How much is gained toward the right rearing of youth by a system which thus enlists the wise and the good in their behalf, and how much more when that system awakens in that class a personal interest in behalf of them individually, which finds its suitable gratification in constant disinterested efforts to further their highest interests.

4. It constitutes a system by means of which the efforts of the Church in behalf of the young may be most advantageously combined and concentrated, and by which, too, those efforts in that combined and concentrated state may be diffused throughout her entire limits. Organization, system, plan, is essential to give efficiency to the energies of the Church in behalf of any distinct interest, and the Sunday-school supplies this desideratum in respect of the religious culture of youth, in every aspect which the entire subject presents.

The success which has attended the Sunday-school cause abundantly demonstrates its efficiency as the grand instrumentality by which the Church is to fulfill her obligations to the rising generation. There are many influential and flourishing denominations in our country which are indebted, almost exclusively, for the accessions that sustain and enlarge them, to the machinery of their Sunday-schools. And in the Methodist Church, so much is revival influence indebted to this agency, even under the very partial limit in which it has yet been employed, so large is the proportion of the accessions to the Church that come from the ranks of the Sunday-school, as to bring experience to the confirmation of theory, that Sunday-school instruction, judiciously conducted, is but a preparatory process to bring its subjects everywhere within the saving influences of the ministry, and that the transition from the Sunday-school into the Church, under any system of aggressive operations, wisely adjusted and complete, is a result sure and inevitable.

A groundwork of religious knowledge, broadly and deeply laid in the season of youth, by means of the Sunday-school system, presents such opening for the access of gospel agencies as almost invariably secures, however untoward the future circumstances, an eventual submission to the rule of Christ; and for the most part the most enlightened, con-

sistent, and uniform Christians of our day, are those who in early life enjoyed the instructions of the Sunday-school.

It is evident, therefore, that commensurate with the strength of the reasons which impell the Church to the religious instruction of the young, are the obligations to develop in fullest proportions and in wise adjustment the Sunday-school enterprise. The question, then, naturally arises, has the Church expanded this system so as to make its operations coëxtensive with the youth dependent upon her? Are all the youth, accessible to Methodist effort, embraced within the sphere of Sunday-school enterprise? If so, our Church is faithfully fulfilling this important function. If not, her great mission is but partially regarded, and somewhere there rests a most solemn responsibility.

Again, if it is true that the young sustain so important a relation to a system of religious instruction, then it is not enough that those children be embraced in it whose parents and immediate friends themselves, on their own responsibility, provide it; but, by all the obligations of usefulness, it is the business of the Church to contribute the money and, if necessary, other means to promote the religious interests of the young in destitute sections, as an integral part of that grand system of missionary operations by which the gospel is diffused and the world converted. And it constitutes a leading recommendation of the Sunday-school system, and a strong reason of its fitness as an important instrumentality by which the Church impresses herself upon and fulfills her duties to the young, that it is an agency so well adapted to the accomplishment of this extended sphere of benevolent results.

No principle is more incontestable than that the Church is bound to assume every function of usefulness which any development of her capabilities will make practicable. This follows from the very nature of Christianity, which is that of aggressive usefulness—from the spirit of the gospel itself,

which is that of benevolence, and from a predominant design of the Church's institution, which was organized with a view to the widest and most comprehensive effort for the furtherance of every object having a bearing upon the interests and progress of the gospel. Of course, then, if by the religious culture of the young, their religious interests are furthered, and, by consequence, the cause of God itself, it is not enough that those children who are in certain favored circumstances should be provided with the advantages of Christian instruction, but all children, wherever found within the limits of her possible effort, occupy such relations of dependence to the Church as to require, that she may fulfill her entire obligations, a provision for them of the same advantages.

Indeed, such are the results of religious training, through the Sabbath-school, that in all destitute sections, the most effectual method, considered with reference to ultimate effects to extend the gospel, is to prosecute with zeal and energy the Sunday-school enterprise among the young, and by all the obligations to missionary effort, therefore, by all the considerations which urge to the extension of the system of the Church itself, and the general diffusion of Christianity, is the Church impelled to the extension of the Sunday-school system in every section, within her limits, where the young are to be found. We send our ministers as missionaries in destitute sections, and feel bound to occupy through missionary enterprise the entire field within our territorial limits; but these, addressing their energies to the adult classes, who, ignorant of the rudiments of Christianity, and confirmed in habits of sin, are well-nigh impervious to gospel influences, but little success is had for the most part in comparison with the expenditure of labor and means. Were these same communities approached through a different line of attack, and instead of exhausting energy upon these adult classes mainly, suitable and systematic efforts were made to organize

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the children of these communities under the general Sunday-school system, by which they could be regularly indoctrinated into religious truth, and prepared for the reception of the saving influences of the gospel, vastly different would be the results which would follow the missionary operations of the Church. Time would be required, it is true, for the exhibition of these results in completest form, but when fully realized we should see communities all transformed, the character of their people, religious, intellectual, and industrial improved, the institutions of Christianity established in vigorous maturity, and enterprise and thrift everywhere pervading their entire limits.

There are, perhaps, in all communities, however highly favored religiously, certain sections dark and degraded, in which Christianity, whatever its success around, has made but little inroad. These are generally made up, as to the adult classes, of those who from ignorance, low vices, and untowardness of circumstances, are almost beyond the reach of the ministry; and, in those cases which are not, are to a large extent incapable of high moral transformation through the ordinary instrumentalities of the pulpit. The very fact that they have remained stationary amidst surrounding light and privilege proves the fixedness of their moral debasement, and their insensibility to the ordinary influences of the ministry. But these communities have children. Could these not yet subjected to the dominion of the vices of their fathers, but susceptible of the enlightenment of knowledge and of the impressions of religion, be gathered by the benevolent exertion of other more favored communities, under a system of Sunday-school instruction, these communities might be effectually reached. Such a course, vigorously prosecuted, would soon open an effectual door to the saving operations of the gospel—revivals of religion would spring up among these Sunday-school beneficiaries, and under circum-

stances the best calculated to embrace within them even the adult classes. But even if these latter still remained imperious to the gospel, so diffused would be the elements of truth and virtue among the rising generation, that, when their fathers had passed away, and they had taken their places on the great theatre of action, then would these communities assume an aspect in striking contrast with their former degradation. The cultivation thus received by the youth would sooner or later show itself in the presentation everywhere of a higher standard of intellectual, moral, and social character; and these same communities, before so debased, would soon attain a common level in all the higher interests of civilization with the most advanced. In relation to such communities, it may be safely said that no process for their moral elevation can be successful which does not thus begin with the rising generation; and by all the obligations under which the Church is to promote the religious weal of men, and especially of those encompassed within her own territorial limits, and by all the restraints which the existence of these degraded spots in her midst impose upon the energies of the Church, and by all the increase of aggressive power which would be gained by their subjugation to Christianity and participancy in the positive movements of the Church, is the Church bound to occupy all these fields by an active, energetic system of Sunday-school operations.

But the Sunday-school system generally, and especially in its relations to destitute neighborhoods, is recommended, not only by its direct tendency to multiply the subjects of Christianity, but likewise by its happy reflex influence upon all who are engaged in its promotion. In respect of its financial feature, it furnishes a wide field for the cultivation of the benevolence and liberality of the Church. Children of every class, and especially of the destitute and unfortunate, have a wonderful hold upon the sympathies of men. And an in-

terest of this kind, in which children are immediately involved, when suitably conducted and presented, will be a standing appeal to the liberality of the Church, better calculated to insure success, and thereby to educate the membership to the right standard of charity, and to enlarge and extend their views generally as to their relations to the general objects of benevolence than almost any other within the entire range of the Church's operations. But in respect of those directly engaged in the department of management and instruction, its effect would be one of great blessing. In the nature of God's own economy, no one can engage with a single eye in a work of this kind, so disinterested and replete with good to others, without sharing in its prosecution a blessing from heaven. The exercises of the Sunday-school are religious exercises. And the entire business is conducted with such reference and under such circumstances as to make it to the teacher, with every recurrence of it, a positive means of grace. The prayer and praise necessarily connected with and incident to it—the contact of the mind with the important lessons of religious truth involved—the kindly feelings of sympathy and affection and disinterested zeal enlisted—the consciousness of doing something by positive intention for the promotion of God's cause—all tend to the enlivenment of religious emotion, to an increase of religious affection and knowledge in those engaged as teachers.

Indeed, the very scheme itself of the Sabbath-school, when extended to embrace every community, involves so much of benevolence, of enlargement of view, such clear apprehension of the true ends of Church organization, that in every way, to all who are engaged in it, from the Church herself, in her organic capacity, which plans and manages it, down to the humblest teacher of its most elementary departments, its wise and vigorous prosecution, commensurate with the wide sphere of demand, cannot fail to be an incalculable blessing.

This extension of the Sunday-school system, while it will accomplish these high religious purposes, will at the same time secure to it the facilities needed to render it, as before stated, an efficient instrumentality in the diffusion of the elements of literary education among the beneficiary classes. So that, in proportion to its fitness, in this respect, to accomplish one class of objects, it is rendered capable of being made the agent for the accomplishment of the other.

The widest extension of this system, therefore, is not only the duty but the interest of the Church, being attended by consequences in every sense favorable to her prosperity.

The question then recurs, Has the Methodist Church seen to it that her Sunday-school system has embraced within it all the children accessible to its effort? It is here that the test is furnished, by which she may determine the extent of her compliance with her obligations to the rising generation.

There can be no doubt, that within recent years there has been a very considerable awakening to this great interest in the Methodist Episcopal Church; and now, in not a few sections of this wide-spread connection, a degree of attention is turned to it which indicates a course of rapid improvement. But still, whatever in this department may have been accomplished, the general statistics of the Church, or, in the absence of these, the facts which lie within the compass of every man's observation, will show that, as a Church, we can claim no distinction as yet on the ground of superior devotion to the religious interests of the young.

The notion that the pulpit is almost the only agency in the promotion of the great interests of Christianity, under which our Church set out, and in accordance with which her system was arranged, has greatly retarded the growth of proper ideas of the Sunday-school, and the adjustment of our ecclesiastical system, with reference to its promotion. The habit of immediate success has disqualified our ministry for

the slow, systematic operations of the Sunday-school, and, with the pulpit as a medium of access, a spirit of impatience has too much rejected all other instrumentalities. Until our Church abandons this restricted system, and, comprehending the entire range of her legitimate operations, adjusts herself in the use of every variety of subordinate agency which promises usefulness, she will never be able to fulfil her obligations to the rising generation.

But how are these results to be accomplished? How is the Church to adjust herself to the Sabbath-school interest? Or, to change the form of inquiry, by what means is the Church to develop fully her Sabbath-school function?

Under any plan that might be adopted to accomplish these ends, there are two things which we hold to be indispensable as preliminary.

First: The provision of a literature suitable to the young, on a scale commensurate with the number of the young and their entire wants. We refer not now to the circulation of this literature, but to the getting it up, and the actual being of it, under such circumstances as to render it practically attainable. It is this which constitutes the great instrument, in the use of which the Sunday-school becomes the chief agency through which the Church fulfills her duty to the young, and without which, all her efforts in this department, whether in the form of Sunday-schools or otherwise, are wholly inadequate and inefficient. It is one of the most favorable indications now presented by our Church, that, for the first time in her history, she is beginning to furnish this literature for the young on a scale correspondent with existing wants; and we believe that, under its present excellent management, if the proper efforts are made for the completion of the various other features of the Sunday-school system, every element will be embraced needed for the speedy advancement of this agency to its proper position of extended

usefulness. In addition to the many suitable books and tracts now being furnished, and which will continue to be furnished as the growing wants of the Sunday-school demand, the Sunday-school Visitor, designed especially to advance the religious interests of the young, is a periodical of highest merit, and must itself constitute, wherever it circulates, a powerful auxiliary in the fulfillment of the Church's obligation to her young.

Second: The arrangement of Sunday-school houses, with such reference to comfort as to make the continuance of these schools through all seasons of the year practicable. In the nature of things, it is utterly impossible, however well arranged and complete the plan in all other respects, to maintain, or even to extend, Sunday-school machinery over all the neighborhoods of the land, much less to conduct it with vigor and fullest success, when necessarily it is suspended in respect of almost the entire country during several months of the year. But how can this be avoided, when most of the country houses in which these schools are held, are so incomplete as to allow no means of comfort in inclement seasons. In our towns and cities, where these houses are suitably provided, the schools are continued through all seasons, and there the Sunday-school enterprise prospers: indeed, there only do we see an exhibition of it any thing like adapted to the wants of the young. This condition of the country houses has greatly tended to hinder and repress Sunday-school enterprise in the Methodist Church; and until altered by improvements which will allow of the continuance of these schools through all seasons, the Sunday-school system, however much it may be facilitated in all its other interests, can never be brought into use on that ample scale demanded by its own capabilities of usefulness and the responsibilities of the Church.

With these preliminary conditions settled, we come now to

the machinery necessary to the right development of the Sunday-school system.

Now, the country, in its relation to Sunday-schools, as we have already seen, may be considered as made up of two classes of communities or neighborhoods. First, those which may be regarded as Christian, having in themselves all the elements or resources necessary to the Sunday school ; and, second, those that are unchristian or destitute, in which, for the formation and maintenance of Sunday-schools, some of the required elements must come from abroad. By these are meant those dark sections which are to be found occasionally in the most improved districts of the country, together with those communities now embraced within the missionary fields of the Church.

Now, in reference to this first class of communities, all that is necessary to secure among them the development and maintenance of the Sunday-school interest, is just so much machinery as will turn their attention to, and keep it awakened in behalf of this interest, and as will lead the way to the right combination and coöperation of the elements existing. They need light to awaken attention, to stimulate motive, and then a plan suitable to organize and perpetuate efficient operations. With advantages such as these, in communities in whom the groundwork of Christianity is already laid, the obligations of effort in behalf of the religious interests of their children are too easily apprehended, and the happy results of Sunday-schools, when once begun, are too easily seen to require any thing further to secure their successful promotion.

But to provide this aid, thus demanded by these advanced communities, the formation of Annual Conference Sunday-school Societies or Unions is an important step. The statistics they collect, the annual reports they send forth, and the facilities they provide of access to suitable books, all tend to awaken the attention and to enkindle the zeal of the Church

generally in behalf of this interest. But, in addition to this general effect, by means of their annual celebrations, and the agencies then employed, the preachers themselves are enlightened and stimulated, and stronger motives are derived to activity and enterprise throughout their various fields of labor.

But these Conference Unions must not rely upon these indirect influences, as important and favorable as they are. Something more is required to insure the perfect unfolding of the system. Let it be a feature, that each preacher shall gather the people together, and lecture them in reference to this interest; that where schools do not exist, he shall, in meetings called expressly for the purpose, have superintendents and teachers appointed, it being his business to see persons individually, if necessary, to induce them to engage as teachers; that he shall himself call upon such parents as are indifferent or reluctant, and, by persuasion and the exercise of personal influence, induce them to unite in these schools; that he shall, if necessary, make collections and suggest the method, and, if necessary, assume the business himself, of obtaining the books needed for the prosecution of the enterprise; that, if possible, he be present at the organization of these schools, and at all events be frequently present during their exercises, and, by identifying himself with them, become a general counsellor and director of their interests, and infuse an animating zeal in every mind and throughout their various departments. And to insure the performance of these duties by the preacher, let the Quarterly Conference have so much jurisdiction over the whole subject, as to make it the duty of the preacher to report to it each quarter what he has done in the discharge of these duties, and as will authorize it to coöperate in its own action with him in furtherance of these his specific duties. In addition, let it be the duty of Presiding Elders to examine, particularly during each quarterly visit, into the acts of the preacher, in respect of this inte-

rest—not in a general sense, but specifically; and let the Annual Conference, in the examination of character, inquire particularly as to the manner in which these duties are performed; or, rather, let the Annual Conference, assembled in the capacity of a Sunday-school Society, taking a day, or as much time as may be necessary for this purpose and others connected with the Sunday-school, inquire of every preacher as to the manner of his discharge of these duties, and hold each one strictly amenable for any neglect, as they would for the neglect of any of the more immediate duties connected with the ministration of the Word. Now, the faithful performance of ministerial duty, thus secured, would insure the existence and prosperity of these schools in all the various religious communities. For it would provide them, first, with the necessary light to awaken their attention and zeal; and, second, the necessary plan to secure general concert and coöperation in the actual organization and conduct of these schools.

Now, something like this plan has been adopted already by some of the preachers, and examination will show that such preachers are the most efficient men in Sunday-school operations—indeed, that for what has already been actually achieved, the Church is indebted almost exclusively to them. But what the Church needs, for the full development of the Sunday-school interest, is some general system of the kind specified, which will enlist all the preachers in every field of labor, and make such attention to the Sunday-school cause an integral part of the preachers' operations in every station and circuit within the Church's jurisdiction. Such a system, once adopted, has all the elements of its own perpetuity. The coöperation which it involves, precluding the indications of indifference and neglect, now so discouraging to the most zealous, would animate every individual interested, and the results of good so rapidly achieved would vindicate the glory

of the enterprise, and infuse throughout the entire mass of the Church constantly increasing motives to the most active exertions.

The second class of the communities of which the country, considered in its relation to Sabbath-schools, is composed, as before stated, is made up of two sub-classes. First, those destitute communities which are found here and there as dark spots in the midst of better society, and which are embraced within the limits of circuits and stations already formed; and, second, those general communities which, destitute in every part of them of the elements necessary to constitute them self-supporting, are occupied by the Church as missionary fields.

Now, in reference to both these sub-classes, the foreign elements needed to secure an extension of the Sunday-school system in their midst, are teachers and money to provide suitable books. How, now, are these to be provided? As the relation of proximity to this foreign aid requisite differs in respect of these two sub-classes, the method by which this aid must be provided is likewise different.

In reference to this first sub-class, the number embraced within the limits of the different circuits and stations varies; but, in general, after the plan which we have specified for the various religious neighborhoods has been, by faithful execution, fully developed, the number of these communities then left unprovided with Sunday-school privileges would be but few. For so evident would the benefits be to all—so general and decided would be the enthusiasm awakened—that the system itself would have a tendency to propagate itself that would in the end make many a community, now regarded, from its own destitution, as indifferent, the spontaneous providers of its own Sunday-school privileges. But still, after all these means had exhausted themselves, there would, doubtless, yet be in many of our circuit fields some

dark spots for whom the resources of the Sunday-school, if provided at all, must come from without.

We have before specified the manner in which the literary education of this class is to be provided for, through the agency of subordinate educational Unions, established in each circuit and station. Now, let these same agencies take the business of providing the Sunday-school for these communities, and inasmuch as the Sunday-school may, as we have shown, in the absence of other means, be used as an instrument for the diffusion of elementary literary education ; since this class, thus requiring benevolent aid to enjoy Sunday-school privileges, is the same class requiring like aid to enjoy Common-school education, there would be, by this arrangement, that fortunate conjuncture which at once vindicates its propriety, and gives to it the character of a complete system for the accomplishment of the entire sphere of benevolent educational enterprise for the young, both literary and religious.

Let it be the business of these Unions to ascertain the number of these destitute neighborhoods, and to provide teachers for them. The week-day schools, which they may have established, will serve as a basis for the Sunday-school, and the teachers in them may be likewise employed in the Sunday-school. But as Sunday-school teaching is so obviously a benevolent and useful employment, it will not be difficult to enlist in it, in the various neighborhoods convenient to the destitute, such a number as may be required for the successful prosecution of the enterprise. Let it be the business of these Unions, in conjunction with the preachers, to engage these teachers, and, by a vigorous system of exertion and oversight, to see to it that at least all the children accessible to Methodist effort enjoy these privileges. There might be visitors appointed to attend, at stated periods, these schools, that, by their presence and counsel, and, if need be, addresses,

parents, and children, and teachers, all might be stimulated and encouraged. Celebrations, too, might be provided, of either single schools, or schools in combination, in which, by the use of suitable machinery, the Sunday-school cause might be promoted.

To raise the funds necessary to supply the books needed, the plan already adopted by some of the conference societies of appropriating a specified portion of the general collections to this object, is the most feasible. Several advantages are gained by this plan. First it obviates that inequality which would otherwise exist in the amount of claim upon the individuals of the several stations or circuits to supply the destitute. Second, by making its destitute section dependent upon the general fund it insures to all help. Third, by this general spread of the benevolence of the Church, her views, especially in relation to the Sunday-school cause, are expanded, and the characteristics of the Church are elevated and improved. But if this *pro rata* distribution of the general fund thus raised be in certain sections inadequate, there is, in most communities, liberality enough if combined and concentrated by means of these Unions and the preachers, whose zeal is supposed to be properly kept alive by the annual conferences to which they are amenable, to insure to every dark region within their limits every facility needed to the full enjoyment of Sunday-school instruction. These Unions themselves might keep depositories of books, from which, with the funds thus obtained, they could, under their own supervision and direction, supply these beneficiary Sunday-schools as they needed.

The second sub-class of communities, *viz.*, those now occupied as mission fields without such immediate proximity to those more advanced, and covering a wider extent of territory, are incapable of subjection to such a complete system of oversight and personal aid for the extension over them of

Sunday-school machinery : still, much may be done to supply them with the necessary resources, and to secure the desired result. Here the responsibilities of the enterprise, to a large extent, necessarily rest upon the missionary. Instead of the notion now prevailing that his exclusive business is to preach, let him be charged, as an essential part of his mission, with the duty of instructing and securing the instruction by others of the children. This course is recommended, as we have seen, by the consideration that it is the best of all others calculated to the attainment of his principal object, the evangelization of the people. To effect this, let him organize the children within the range of his several appointments, as far as practicable, through suitable efforts among the parents, into Sunday-schools, and if it be impossible to obtain the coöperation of others as teachers, let himself become the teacher. But, generally, he himself need not be alone in this divinely-appointed business. In every place, perhaps, where the people are willing to receive the missionary at all, his own proper zeal, wisely directed, might enlist the requisite number efficiently to conduct under his own guidance the exercises of the school. And if they could not be found or made available at first, his own example of disinterested devotion, and the happy effects soon visible among the young, that class appealing most to the sympathies of the people, would not fail soon to enlist the coöperation of others, in sufficient numbers to meet pressing wants. Revivals of religion would soon occur in the schools, and these latter themselves, therefore, would soon furnish the necessary supplies for their own independent management. Our missionaries, for the most part, have pursued a mistaken policy in respect of the great object before them. They have relied too much upon the mere pulpit, while in fact the Sunday-school is their true weapon for availability and success. It is a mistake to suppose that in missionary fields, Sunday-schools, by reason of

the absence of important elements, are impracticable. The preacher has within himself all the resources necessary to the development of the Sunday-school system among any people who will receive him, and patience and wisdom, with due reliance upon the divine authority, will enable him to give such practical efficiency to this system as to constitute it, after all, the most successful of all agencies for the real elevation and salvation of those he serves.

The enterprise of the Church which aims at the general diffusion of the elements of literary education among the beneficiary class so entirely blends with that which aims at the universal extension of Sabbath-school instruction—indeed their interests are so identical—that in these mission communities, now referred to, the machinery employed to secure the former might be made specially available to secure the latter.

The funds to supply the libraries must, as in the case of the other class of destitute communities, be furnished from the general Sunday-school collections. And here we perceive an important purpose to be subserved by these conference Sunday-school Unions. For, in addition to the fact that they assume the oversight of this interest throughout their entire limits, and provide for these general collections in which due reference to the claims of the destitute is had, they likewise constitute agencies for the ascertainment of every distinct destitute section, and for the distribution of the fund among all, according to the claims of equity and benevolence. It is, in short, a system adapted to ascertain what is wanted—to raise what is wanted—to distribute what is wanted.

But to meet, if this plan of Sunday-school extension is effectually prosecuted, this heavy pecuniary demand coming up from these destitute communities, the Sunday-school collections must be largely increased. The indifference and

neglect with which this great interest, especially in its benevolent features, has heretofore been regarded by the Methodist Church, have kept these collections down to the lowest standard. Greater importance must be attached to them. By the diffusion of light and the adoption of right machinery, the people must be brought to feel their obligations in these premises, and to exercise in behalf of this interest a more enlightened liberality. Such means, wisely directed, will not fail to produce these results. The same causes operated for a long time with like effects in regard to the missionary collections. But the spread of light and the consequent awakening of public attention, has already resulted in an advance upon the past, commendable to the Church, and glorious in its consequences. The people have the means—the cause demands them—let light be given—let the ministry assume their rightful place of guides in the great work of educating the people, as to the claims and obligations involved in the scheme of the Sunday-school, and then shall a standard of Sunday-school collections, of adequate elevation, be reached, and with it every element of enterprise for the amplest unfolding everywhere of the functions of the Sunday-school.

Thus will the system of education, literary and religious, for the rising generation, be complete, and the Church will have in it assumed that attitude towards this important class in which, while her own solemn obligations will be fully met, her fullest capabilities will be made available to compass the grand object aimed at, their subjection to the dominion of God. Such a system lacks nothing for its completeness and efficiency, for while it covers the entire field, providing for every variety of educational want, it contains in it such a union of elements as makes each tributary to the efficient action of all the rest, and as secures, in results harmonious

and proportionate, every object of the entire educational function.

With such an extended sphere of usefulness before her, shall not the Church adjust herself to its proper occupancy? It is time that she had abandoned her meagre, contracted notions of enterprise. She cannot tabernacle longer in her ancient forms. The objects which lie in this field she must appropriate: the youth of the country must be hers, or else under a different system of adjustment, evolved in the progress of society, they must fall under other influences, by which they are alienated, and alienated, for the most part, forever. The forces of society are fast working out a felt necessity for universal education. With the Church there is now no longer any option: she must either content herself to see this mighty agency glide from her own hands and become an instrument of antagonism to her own action, and of overthrow to her objects, or else seize the happy juncture, now so auspiciously presented, to make it an integral part of her own system, and by its complete development, under her own direction, make it the glorious instrumentality for the enlargement of her own power, and for the achievement of those results in which consists more than all else her real progress.

For such enlargement of her scheme, no period has been so favorable. The time has been when Methodism, little and despised, and confined in its influence to the humbler ranks of society, was without power to maintain a system like this, so comprehensive as to compass the entire sphere of educational objects; but that time has passed away. Her rapid spread among all classes, and over the entire extent of our territorial limits—the efficient action of her forces so well adapted to aggression and to progress—has already attained for her such an elevation of social position, such a combination of all the elements of power, moral, intellectual, and material, that for no enterprise of usefulness is her strength now

inadequate, and for that glorious department of action, the education, literary and religious, of the people, she has now not only every necessary resource, but in a degree, perhaps, more extended and ample than all other organizations.

Why, then, not arouse herself, and expand her resources to the attainment of these glorious results? Every consideration of efficiency, of progress, and even of vitality itself, urges to it. The enterprise we have seen is practicable—promising results inspiring to every heart, and stimulating to the highest, boldest endeavors. We may not—indeed, we expect not—to bring out at once the entire scheme in all its proportions, and in its most successful execution. Great enterprises are necessarily slow in their development. The very grandeur of the conception necessarily makes slow its practical exhibition and adjustment. But ours, by profession, is a life of faith; and by appointment we are in an important sense the guardians of the future fortunes of the Church. It is ours to perceive the present, and by wise forecast to apprehend its relations to the future, and setting in motion the schemes of usefulness, to leave whatever we may not be able to command for their completion, to the action of posterity, and the superintendence of a Providence that never dies. Upon us, therefore—upon us, of the present generation there rests in respect of this great department, a most solemn responsibility. Let us prove ourselves adequate to it, and, by beginning at once, let us do what we can in our day and generation toward the right adjustment of the Church for the complete development of her educational function.

SECTION III.

THE LITERATURE FUNCTION

THAT expansion of the system of the Church which will render it as useful as the present state of society will enable it to become demands, still further, the development of its literature function.

The pulpit, as a medium for the diffusion of religious information, can be brought to bear only at stated periods, with intervals of greater or less extent; and even if it could be employed more continuously, its appropriate topics are susceptible of other modes of profitable treatment, and, though of the first importance, are necessarily so limited as to leave unoccupied many fields of knowledge essential to the Church's prosperity.

The results of usefulness which a religious literature may be made to achieve, are many and most valuable.

Religious truth, in whatever form, if circulated under the sanction of the Church, and, consequently, as an instrumentality for the maintenance and diffusion of Christianity, must, in virtue of God's own economy, be attended by favorable consequences. It is bread cast upon the waters, which may yet be found after many days. But when that truth is embodied in the form of literature, and is so ample as to embrace every department of Christian knowledge, and as to adapt itself to every variety of moral condition—when, indeed, it is so various as to go forth in this permanent form, addressing every class of men, exhibiting under every aspect the wide contents of Christian revelation, and presenting every variety of information, of motive, and appeal, which the moral relations of men in their diversified conditions require.

and so circulated as to spread itself in every section and among every family, then, indeed, does it become an auxiliary in the great work of human salvation and elevation, of the highest, most sacred value.

What is it of religious light—what is it of religious motive, which men in every condition and circumstance may need, that a religious literature may not be made to combine, and, in a permanent form, circulate among all ranks of men?

Combining, as it may, so much of that truth specially adapted to the awakenment and conversion of the sinner, it is susceptible in itself, and especially in coöperation with the pulpit, of being rendered an important instrumentality of aggression. It is true, it does not present such matter as is likely to constitute the staple of the reading of this class of community: still, in a reading age, its extended circulation everywhere among those whose tastes are in nearer adaptation to it, connected and associated as these classes actually are, will not fail to give it, among this class, some degree of currency. The intimate relation of those among whom it freely circulates to the unconverted makes them purveyors of it for this class; and proximity and convenience of access will often cause books and papers to be read, which, if they had to be sought for, would fail to attract the slightest attention. But there is an aggressive power in the truth of the gospel, and these books thus read, assisted in many instances by the circumstances under which they are read, will often result in consequences saving to the soul. The pulpit has its own peculiar modes of attack, and often after these have been thus far tried in vain, these books, presenting as they do the truth in every connection and association calculated to fix attention and secure access, will prove themselves the instrument for the attainment of the desired result, the awakenment and conversion of the soul. The young, especially, will read this literature, and, impressible as they are, if they be

not at once led by it to the embracement of religion, they will derive from it a mass of religious ideas which, while they will increase the facilities, and, consequently, the chances of the future access of gospel instrumentalities, they will constitute so many additional advantages for the happiest exhibition of the Christian life. How many persons have received their first religious convictions in the reading of this literature. Within the observation, perhaps, of every man, there are some. But, if in the limited circulation of it thus far these results have not been rare, how numerous might we expect them to be under such a circulation of it as it is susceptible of, when this function shall have received its fullest development. Indeed, every thing read in this department by the irreligious is attended by favorable consequences. It leaves upon the mind some impression destined to exercise a favorable influence upon the fortunes of the soul.

But, in reference not only to the unconverted, but more emphatically to the professing Christian, the circulation of religious literature increases the means of access to the peculiar appliances of the pulpit, and furnishes for it a wider basis upon which to act. Every advance in knowledge among the people increases the power of the pulpit, and multiplies the chances of its saving results. As a harbinger of the pulpit, therefore, preparing the way of the Lord, it is an agency of the highest value.

Such are the relations of men to the affairs of this world—so constant and pressing their connection with them, as to create in the Christian everywhere a constant liability to be overborne by them. It is this, indeed, that constitutes the warfare of the Christian—the prolific source of his chiefest trials and difficulties. It is the diffusion of religious ideas to such extent as to secure the constant occupancy of the mind with them, and the establishment of habits of religious thinking, that constitutes the grand agency by which this worldly

tendency is to be restrained, and the ascendancy of spiritual interests maintained. The character of men, in its religious relations, will always be determined by the prevailing cast of the mass of their active ideas. If these be secular, necessarily they will evolve a manner of life in harmony with them : if, on the other hand, these be religious, the result of a habitual conscious reference of the mind to religious objects, then, necessarily, the character will assume a religious mould, and the whole life a direction to religious ends. This principle is illustrated in the case of protracted meetings, and the revivals which ensue from them. In the ordinary round of pulpit ministrations, the opportunity of presenting the truth being single and occasional, most generally, if the mind is arrested on any one occasion so far as to admit the conscious entertainment of religious ideas, these are soon dissipated by the secular ideas with which the mind is already stored, but under the plan of serial meetings, following each other in rapid succession, the mind, when once arrested, is firmly held by the constant play of gospel forces in contact with religious truth, so that these ideas are constantly multiplied, until at last they become dominant and engrossing, when the effect manifests itself in the succumbing of the individual to their controlling influence. When revivals are in progress, the whole community are engrossed with religious ideas—the minds of all are prevailingly employed about the subjects of religion ; but when these extraordinary efforts, to which revivals under God are indebted, cease, the mind of community under the strong impulse of worldly connections, is prone to lapse under the dominion of the secular ideas to which it was formerly subjected, and just in proportion to this result will be the loss of religious fervor and the genuine characteristics of religious life. Fervent, zealous Christians are so by virtue of the constant employment of their intellects about spiritual subjects, and with spiritual reference—this the conscious-

ness of all such attest, and this they manifest by the readiness with which they converse upon these topics, and by their evident congeniality and familiarity with them.

It is because the pulpit, brought to bear as it may be in every precinct of community, in constantly recurring periods, and susceptible in every respect of systematic employment, has such happy adaptation to diffuse these ideas, and to maintain the intellect everywhere in constant employment with them, that it was ordained of God as the chief instrumentality for the furtherance of the gospel among men. But a religious literature, extensively circulated, would necessarily tend to accomplish the same object. Its office is to diffuse ideas—to enlighten and to entertain. In addition to the religious engagement of the mind, during the actual process of the reading, it necessarily, by the ideas with which it stores the mind, and the suggestions which it offers, furnishes the intellect with materials of thought and occupation, which will contribute largely to the religious character of the life. How powerfully auxiliary then must it be in this respect to the operations of the pulpit. Indeed, in an important particular it has superior advantages for efficiency; for while this cardinal instrumentality can only be brought to bear under specific conditions and periodically, this is an instrumentality which may diffuse itself everywhere, and at all times—which, susceptible of domestic, and even individual appropriation, may be rendered indeed what no other instrumentality of human employment can be, ever acting, and yet universally acting.

The reading propensity of the American people of this age is remarkable. It is confined to no class or condition of human life. All men, all ages, everywhere, read; and in this remarkable characteristic they are distinguished from all preceding ages, and, perhaps, from all other people. If religious literature then may be rendered so powerful an in-

strumentality in the spread and maintenance of the Christian cause, the Church, by availing herself to the fullest extent of this spirit to secure its widest possible circulation, would find in it an agency of progress worthy her highest regard.

As elevated as is the standard of American civilization, and as numerous as are the agencies of religious light among the people, yet a thoughtful examination will show that the greatest drawback upon the piety of Christians is ignorance and error. If defects exhibit themselves in the religious life—if instability and inconsistency too often mark the Christian profession—if actual relapses occur—if, in short, Christianity, as developed in the life, too often shows itself below the standard of the Bible, it is not so much the fruit of insincerity or hypocrisy, or intentional wrong, but rather of partial or erroneous views of the plan of salvation and of the moral law, in the details of its application to the practical affairs of life. While it is true that unavoidable ignorance will save men in a future world from the consequences of a failure to embrace the fundamental conditions of salvation, yet even ignorance of that kind will not save them from any other consequences which flow from it. Of course, then, where that ignorance is not unavoidable, its drawbacks or disadvantages, whatever they may be, will all be experienced. This is a law of God's economy, not only as a punishment of sin, in which all ignorance has its origin, but as an incentive to its removal. It is not difficult to perceive in what manner mistaken or inadequate notions of the relations of the plan of salvation to the world—of the conditions of salvation—of Providence—of the relative obligations of men—of the moral law—or of any doctrine or duty, would impair Christianity, whether as an element of experience or a rule of life. Error of opinion, misconception or ignorance, must, where truth is every thing in the production of right results, affect

those results, and while they exist, be an insuperable barrier to fullest success.

Christianity in its completest expression, in the actual exemplification of its entire contents, is slow in its movements. Perhaps this was demanded to conform it, in this respect, to the great law of probation governing the entire moral state of man; or perhaps it was necessary in view of man's own agency in the work, and to conform it to the law of progress under which he moves. It may not be surprising therefore, that even in this day of Christian enlightenment, there should prevail among the Christian masses so much of error and ignorance, and of that practical inconsistency and wrong, of which they are in fact the real source: still, when we cast our eyes over the great mass of the Church, and consider the amount of damage inflicted upon Christians themselves, upon the honor and glory of Christianity itself, the depressing effect upon the energies of the Church and her expansive progressive capabilities, it is evident that the removal of this ignorance, and the correction of these errors, the prolific source of so much evil, ought to constitute a leading object of the most strenuous efforts of the Church.

But to accomplish this high purpose, what agency could be more efficient and suitable than the circulation of books, of tracts, and church periodicals? The pulpit itself ought to be extended in its functions, so as to embrace all these subjects upon which the masses need light. There can be no doubt that this instrumentality, in the Methodist Church especially, which started with those few fundamental ideas only in prominent relief with which salvation is immediately concerned, has restricted itself to too narrow a compass of subjects. Much of the narrowness of view which has been characteristic of Methodists, in respect of the functions of the Church and the social aspects of Christianity, is attributable to this radical defect in the management of the pulpit. The wants of the

times, and the openings furnished by the times, demand an enlargement of its functions. In this respect it has not kept pace with the progress of the age. It is, therefore, fast losing its power and prominence, as the grand instrument for upholding and advancing the interests of the Church. That it may enjoy those qualifications necessary to attract and to have access to all classes of men—that it may subserve the purpose designed of the grand instrumentality for the religious instruction of the world, and attain the highest position of usefulness of which it is capable—it must extend the range of its subjects—it must be more practical in its selection and treatment of topics—it must, in short, apprehend the entire sum of the wants of the people, and address itself directly to their adequate and suitable supply.

But the pulpit, even if employed to the full extent of its capabilities, would still be greatly aided in the work of removing ignorance and error by the circulation of religious literature. It is in books that the plan of salvation and all the various subjects which concern the Christian are fully treated. Through them, therefore, opportunities are afforded of enlarged as well as minute information upon all the topics of Christianity which the pulpit, from the nature of its conditions, is unable to afford; and it is precisely such information that is wanted to remove the particular form of ignorance and error now most generally prevailing. Indeed, books and periodicals might be made to embrace every form of knowledge required to meet existing wants, and to constitute a light adapted to the dissipation, everywhere, of every species of moral darkness. No one can doubt that such an agency of enlightenment, circulating everywhere and permeating the entire masses of the country, would powerfully contribute to the removal of ignorance, and the prevalence of truthful, enlightened views throughout the entire ranks of the Church.

But the extended circulation of religious literature would

not only secure this negative result, as important as it is, but would likewise tend to the positive improvement of the Church generally, in every element of enlightened progress. By means of the light and encouragement afforded through practical treatises, pointed, pungent appeals, biographies of the pious, and accounts of the triumphs of the gospel, how many a troubled spirit would be relieved—how many a doubting, desponding heart would be encouraged—how many that were ready to die, would revive and arouse themselves to renewed effort—how many that were dead would come to life again, and become useful laborers in the vineyard of the Lord! There is, in religious knowledge, an enlivening, stimulating property. True, spiritual knowledge is an essential ingredient of religion. It expands the views of religious obligation, becomes the occasion of alienation to the world and engrossment in religious objects, and, incorporated into the life, actualizes itself in religious growth and expansion. Oh, who can estimate the happy results of one good book broadly circulated among the people? Who can estimate how much of good has been secured to the world by the circulation of religious literature? What additions it has made to the sum of human happiness—what additional strength and influence it has imparted to the aggressive forces of the gospel! If all the additions to the triumphs of Christianity and the general cause of the gospel by means of religious books were abstracted from the grand total, how mournful would be the result! But if this literature has in the past exhibited itself so powerful an instrumentality in the promotion of the Christian cause, what might it be if enlarged in its circulation to the full extent of which it is susceptible, and made to achieve the most extended results of which it is capable?

But there is another specific result which religious litera-

ture of the right kind may be made to effect, that is of the utmost importance to the weal of the Church.

Such are the responsibilities of Christians, that it is not enough that they maintain, even in fullest proportions, all the elements of immediate personal piety, but there are objects of usefulness which lie without them, various in kind and magnitude, to the attainment of which they are committed as a necessary and integral part of all true Christian life. These are the various benevolent enterprises of which the Church may avail herself as so many agencies for the right unfolding and cultivation of her own graces, and for the extension of the Christian dominion. But such are the relations of the outward world to human thought, that all Church movement in behalf of these—of uniform life, and commensurate with the magnitude of the interests involved—must be based upon knowledge, upon an intelligent apprehension of those great first principles which underlie and determine the relations of Christians to the rest of mankind. Until the mind of the Church has been so instructed as to be constantly held to these great interests, and as to have incorporated the ideas of their relations to them as constant elements of thought and principle, the Church herself never will be awakened to a proper apprehension of the entire field of her enterprise, or realize the conditions for its constant and universal occupancy. The benevolent enterprise of the Church has ever been partial, fitful, spasmodic, because it has been the product of sympathy and emotion, rather than of a just conception of the great principles which determine its necessity and importance. Restricting our attention to the interests of personal salvation as a Church, we have thus far overlooked and neglected those great elements of God's economy which bring out and indicate the full extent of our obligations to the world around us. These are parts of the great scheme of salvation which minis-

ters themselves too often fail to study, and which, consequently, they rarely explain and enforce in the exercises of the pulpit. But a period has arrived when the Church can no longer expand herself into increasing dimensions, or maintain her present proportions, when she must be false to the high career of usefulness opened up before her, unless she establishes herself on those foundations of intelligence and principle which are her only divinely appointed life-giving supports. No mere superficial work of appeal—no mere transient enlistment of the sympathies—no mere artful trick or policy, can suffice to rear the fabric of world-wide and yet adequately comprehensive Church enterprise. If, then, the entire Church is to be aroused to coöperation in behalf of these great objects of usefulness—if, indeed, the Church is deficient in her enterprise until such coöperation is secured—it is not enough that a few of the most advanced and active have proper views upon these subjects, and that these adopt some system of machinery for the enlistment of the masses, (the policy hitherto, and on account of which the benevolent efforts of the Church, in respect of the numbers engaged, the zeal and wisdom employed, have come far short of the highest standard,) but the masses themselves must be enlightened as to these objects and their duties. They must themselves be educated in the principles of benevolence; then will the motives to action be spontaneous and not external in their origin, and every man finding in himself all the requisite impulse to action, the entire Church will press forward simultaneously and harmoniously in the work of the greatest and most extensive good to the human family. It is this education of the masses, it is this universal diffusion of right knowledge, that the Church now needs to the proper development of the various departments of her benevolent enterprise; and until this grand result be realized, vain and futile are all her efforts to reach the high position of usefulness

to which her more enlightened and zealous friends would elevate her.

But to secure the general spread of this knowledge, the diffusion of this information, thus the true source of benevolent enterprise among the masses, the circulation of books, of tracts, and of periodicals, is the most efficient instrumentality. Christian literature of any kind enlightens the mind, and enlarges and liberalizes the conceptions of usefulness; but by giving it a direction specifically to this end, and securing for it the entire circulation of which it is susceptible, it is evident that these results may be produced in any degree deemed desirable. Every department of usefulness, of Church enterprise, may have its own distinct literature adapted to the enlistment of the public mind in its behalf, and to the circulation among the masses of that information, upon which its right influence depends. If modern times have witnessed any advancement in the enterprise of the Church—any more general awakening among the masses to the objects of usefulness—it is attributable, to a large extent, to the circulation of books, and especially of periodical literature, gotten up with specific reference to these results. It is by means of Church periodicals that the great body of the Church are directed to the objects of enterprise, are enlightened as to their obligations in respect of them, and are united in harmonious co-operation for their accomplishment. Indeed, dependent as all enlightened and extensive Church enterprise is upon knowledge generally diffused, it is difficult to perceive how the Church is ever to be elevated to her right position of usefulness, except by a circulation of a literature adapted to this end. It is this which extends the views of the people beyond themselves, and, holding the mind in contact with the interests of the general cause, enlarges the conceptions of duty, and interests the feelings in all that contributes to the weal of men, and the promotion of Christian interests. Any

Church is stagnant and contracted in all her movements, which does not provide for herself this enlightening, stimulating agency; and Methodism to-day needs more than all else, that she may expand her system to the utmost capacity of usefulness, a well-digested plan for the circulation of right books and periodicals.

Literature is still the channel of which infidelity avails itself to obtain circulation and currency. Those grosser forms of infidelity, which utterly discard the Bible as a divine revelation, and of which Tom Paine, Voltaire, Rousseau, Hobbes, and Hume are the types, have, to a large extent, become obsolete, especially in Protestant countries. The general spread of enlightened Christianity has so diffused the strong evidences of its divinity, as to have shut out, in a great measure, the possibility of absolute skepticism, and within the limits of Protestant Christendom there are but few so bold as to avow it. Still, there are certain classes of mind, among whom, while Revelation is admitted, it is yet so interpreted as to divest it of all that is peculiar and saving, and as reduces it to the level of a mere human composition. These are, first, a certain metaphysical class, who, instead of subjecting the operation of their own minds to the authority of the Scriptures, first elaborate independently certain theories of their own of God and man, and the universe, and then, while admitting the truth of divine Revelation, subject its interpretation to the authority of these theories — explaining away all that conflicts with them, and accepting as real only so much as harmonizes with their own *a priori* conclusions. They likewise embrace a class of idealists, who, with unbalanced minds, under the influence of extravagant imagination, subject the Bible to a mystical or allegorical interpretation, by which all that constitutes its facts are divested of their efficacy, and the whole scheme of Revelation is reduced either to a mere system of idealism, or to a mere mode of religious development in

common with Mohamedanism or Brahmanism, all of which are claimed to be equally divine. The former are usually classed under the general denomination of rationalists — the latter under that of mystics. They both, as respects the particular forms now prevailing, had their origin mainly in Germany — Kant, and Schelling, and Hegel being the founders of the former class — Strauss and Fichte of the latter. But their influence is not confined to their own country. Minds of similar order in Great Britain and the United States, that have been brought into contact with their systems, have imbibed their views, and though not proceeding in every instance to the same extent, yet, under modified forms, as effectually divest Revelation of its divine efficacy. Carlyle, various writers of the *Westminster Review*, and the Martineaus, who, starting with a denial of the Trinity, had already assumed a principle of Biblical interpretation which necessarily led them to the rejection of the peculiarities of the Gospel, are examples of the metaphysical class. Tennyson, the Howitts, Leigh Hunt, Ralph Waldo Emerson, are examples of the mystical class — while Theodore Parker, the most noisy and active of them all, combines in himself both elements, and may be regarded as a blended type of all the existing forms of infidelity.

Now, these individuals, and many others of the same classes, possessed of active intellect, and zealous in the propagation of their tenets, are constantly engaged, in every variety of prose and poetic composition, and through every medium of book and periodical, to circulate their views. The press teems with their productions. The genius, the intellectual power they display, renders them generally attractive, while the extravagant praise of those who, from similarity of taste, are their peculiar admirers, and who generally are of that cast of active intellects that wield a decided influence in the republic of letters, greatly tends to draw public atten-

tion to them ; and these causes have combined to make them more extensively read, especially among the elevated and influential, both in the Church and out of it, than any other works of the day. But presented as they are in forms so plausible, so specious and attractive, how well calculated are their views, tending as they do to set aside the divine character of Revelation, and all that is evangelical and saving in its teachings, gradually to infuse themselves into the minds of those who read them. How natural it is to convert to their embrace those who, from mental constitution and temperament, are peculiarly susceptible to such views—to bias those without previously well-established opinions—to unsettle opinion, and to produce doubts and misgivings, and induce fundamental errors in the minds of those who before had correctly thought and felt upon these momentous subjects ! Indeed, it is impossible to conceive that writings so characterized by all the indications of highest genius, of ardent temperament and zeal, should have such extended circulation all over our land, and among the leading classes of society, without feeling assured that the peculiar infidel views which they are designed to inculcate do exercise a powerful influence in modifying, if not moulding, the religious faith of men.

But if it is by books and periodicals that such pernicious views are disseminated, it is by the same agency that they are to be counteracted. An abundant provision of suitable religious literature would exert this counteracting effect in one or both of two ways. First : it would become in a measure a substitute for these infidel productions, and by curtailing their circulation restrict their influence. Second : it would constitute an antidote to these productions, so that if evil was done by them, a remedy would be at hand for the removal of its effects. If harm is done by books, the policy should be to employ books to remove it. The same disposition and taste which prompts to the reading of the pernicious class,

would, to a large extent, prompt to the perusal of the better class. And it is, perhaps, true that if it is through the instrumentality of books that any general harm is inflicted, no agency that could be employed would be so likely to administer the suitable counteractive, as books themselves.

But after subtracting from the general mass of the current literature of the day that which possesses this decidedly infidel tendency — and a very superficial discrimination would show that it constitutes no small portion of the whole — still that which remains is composed in so large a measure of that which is corrupting by its tendency to minister to the base passions, or secularizing by the steadiness with which all Christian reference is ignored and repudiated, that in respect of its effects upon the Christian interests of society, its consequences are hardly less positively pernicious. It is a curious fact that the largest portion of the most elegant literature of the day, and especially of that which is denominated light literature, and which from the nature of its topics, and the attractiveness of its style, constitutes the staple of the reading of the public, though the product of minds not disposed to doubt the authority of the Bible, and though intended for readers themselves, believers of the Bible, is for the most part destitute of all Christian reference, and, both in its spirit and substance, is as if Christianity had no existence among men. But in addition we have but to frequent the various book marts of the country, to see the vast amount of impure, corrupting literature, without even the merit of literary excellence to redeem it, which in a cheap form is retailed out to the people, and which now constitutes a large portion of the reading matter of the masses.

It is this conduct of the literature of the world, with such steadied repudiation of all Christian spirit and aim—in other words, it is this divorcement of literature from the spirit of Christianity, which has created that aversion of literary men

to evangelical Christianity, about which the celebrated Foster has written so profoundly, which has tended to make the profession of literature unfavorable to right Christian experience—which, creating the impression that the Christian empire is not coëxtensive with the entire sphere of the mind, but that there are regions of mental range unembraced in the dominion of Christianity, has fostered an infidel spirit that has made literature itself an agency of secularization, and for the alienation of the mind from the spirit and objects of right Christianity.

But if such is the effect of much of the standard literature of the day, what must be the influence of that other class, of such abundant circulation, addressed to the lowest, basest passions of men, and whose professed aim is to minister to their excitement and indulgence? How debasing and degrading to human nature! How powerful its neutralizing influence upon all the better agencies of society! How strong its tendency to ruin, forever ruin the soul!

Indeed, when we consider the vast amount of books and periodicals everywhere circulating, and read all over our land, diffusing ideas and suggesting thought, it must be admitted that it is an agency of powerful influence over the mind. If then, these books and periodicals, instead of directing the mind to the great objects of Christianity, are in respect of the best portion of them without religious reference, and destitute of religious spirit, and in respect of the other, positively corrupting, then that influence which they exert must be an influence unchristian in its character, and detrimental to the claims and interests of Christianity.

But, if literature is thus damaging the Christian cause and obstructing its progress, it is literature which must be employed to counteract it. The same thirst for reading—the same principle of curiosity—which is the basis for the circulation of the one class, must be availed of to give currency to

the other—its antidote and corrective. The Church must arouse herself to furnish the entire country with a sanctified literature—a literature which, while it is characterized by all the genius and taste necessary to render it attractive to the cultivated, shall be so pervaded by Christian spirit and Christian reference, as will not only save the mind from secularization, but will hold it in contact with the sacred spirit of a life-giving Christianity. Such a literature, abundantly disseminated in every precinct of the entire community, would substitute in great measure existing literature—would neutralize its secular tendency, and, engrossing to a large extent the reading mania of the people, would employ it as a most valuable auxiliary in the spread of religious information, and the general progress of the gospel.

But, if such be the results which ensue from the dissemination of religious literature, if such be the high function of sanctified literature, it is an undeniable fact that the Methodist Church has never yet employed, to its fullest extent, this agency of usefulness. The proof of it is seen in the absence of all systematic Church plan for providing and circulating such literature to an extent commensurate with the reading capacity and taste of the whole country, and more conclusively in the small proportion which the religious books in the various domestic libraries of the country sustain to those of secular character—in the limited number of religious periodicals circulated in comparison with the secular—and in the positive destitution in many reading families of all even the standard works of evangelical literature. It is true that Methodism, as contracted as was her scheme of instrumentalities in the outset, has always appreciated the value of religious literature, and from its earliest establishment, sought to incorporate it in her system of operations. Mr. Wesley himself was a voluminous writer and compiler of books, and occupied a no inconsiderable portion of his busy life in the

provision and circulation of useful religious books. The mammoth Book Concern, built up and sustained by the patronage of the Methodist Church, is a monument of its appreciation of literature as a constituent Church instrumentality. And as long as the union of the Church was maintained, there was a circulation of books, to some extent, commensurate with the public want. But even then, under the mistaken policy of making that Concern a source of revenue, and for that purpose holding the books above the general market price, and without any systematic plan for efficient distribution, this instrumentality was not allowed its fullest development in the widest possible circulation of the books. But since the separate organization of the Southern Church, we have been without a plan for the provision of books commensurate with the public demand. Our preachers, who heretofore had acted as agents for distribution, have to a large extent abandoned this useful vocation, and, by consequence, for the last several years, while the country has been flooded with secular literature, there has been no corresponding supply of religious books. To the libraries of the country there has been, within that time, but few accessions of books of that character. A comparative dearth of religious literature has been allowed to come upon the people. And to him who rightly appreciates the powerful influence of the literature function upon the public mind, it is alarming to contemplate the tide of secular literature which has everywhere so powerfully set in, and yet the utter absence of that of a sanctified character, which alone is adapted to its successful counteraction. Too long has the Church, arrested in her movements by her unsettled relations in this respect with the Northern Church, allowed herself to be inactive in this department. Besides this arrest of the circulation of religious books, and the accumulation everywhere of those of an opposite kind, which it has occasioned, it has allowed the loss of a taste for

religious reading, and the growth of a taste for that of an opposite character, which has brought upon us a moral crisis at once deplorable and fearful. It has involved us, as a Church, in a loss of moral position and of moral efficiency, which nothing but the wisest and most judicious employment of this function, without delay, will enable us to regain, and even then, time and the most persevering execution alone will insure this desirable result.

But to secure such development of the literature function as will enable it to accomplish these high results of usefulness, the first step is the subjection by the Church of this function to its own control, by assuming the business of providing the books intended for general circulation. This will enable it to control the kind of books read by the people—an object of great importance, not only because of what may be forestalled and prevented by such an arrangement, but because of the power which it secures to the Church of making the best use of this function, in the character of the books brought out, and in adapting it to the changing wants of the public.

But having thus subjected the book interest to her control, the next step is the provision by the Church, in abundance, of such books as she does select. Recognized and adopted as an agency of highest usefulness, and intended, therefore, to be aggressive in its movements, the Church must not wait for demand to elicit supply, but must become the creator and encourager of demand, and thereby force and insure the circulation by at once and abundantly providing the supply. In advance of demand, and for the purpose of preparing the way among the people for the proper appropriation of this agency, she must assume the business of filling the markets with religious books. And not only must she thus furnish books of the right kind, but she must furnish them at the lowest practicable rates. To make the literature function of

the greatest possible value, of course, the books must have the greatest possible circulation; but experience as well as political economy teaches that, *ceteris paribus*, the sale of the books, and consequently their circulation, will be great, inversely as the price. Even those of abundant pecuniary means would be so far influenced by the consideration of price, as to make the extent of circulation largely dependent upon it, and in respect of the indigent, necessarily it would exercise a controlling influence.

It has been the policy of the Methodist Church a long time, through her Book Concern, before the Church division, and the agency system since, to subject the literature function to her own control; and unquestionably, as respects the two grand ideas which such subjection implies, the control of the kind of books, and the largest possible circulation of the books, either of these plans combines every necessary element. But yet, as respects either of these ideas, it must be admitted that, for some reasons, they have failed thus far to make this subjection complete, and the Church consequently has not as yet subordinated to her uses, to its utmost extent, the literature function.

The first reason has been, that heretofore they have been conducted with reference to revenue rather than dissemination: in other words, in their management, the idea of money-making has been paramount to that of distribution. This has restricted the circulation of books in two ways: by causing higher prices to be put upon the books, and smaller stocks kept in the markets; the first having the effect, directly, by diminishing the number of purchasers, and the other, indirectly, by failing to create demand. But not only have they failed, for this reason, to secure a cardinal object of the literature function, the largest possible circulation of books, but likewise by a failure to secure a monopoly of the reading of the Church—the result of defeat in this first grand

object—they have likewise not secured the other leading object of this function, the control of the kind of reading of the Church. To the extent of the failure in obtaining this monopoly, other books find circulation among the people. To say nothing of many other agencies which, taking advantage of this deficiency of supply to disseminate books unfavorable to our views and policy, the American Tract Society has found large room of supply among us, scattering, among many most valuable productions, those whose bearing and effect, especially among our young and the unsettled in opinion, are not the most favorable to the interests of Methodism.

Now, we maintain that the policy of employing the literature function, as a scheme for raising revenue, is utterly unsound. It necessarily implies this doctrine, which must be regarded unsafe, that a Church, as such, in her organic capacity, may engage in pecuniary trade and traffic to raise her means of support. For, if she engages in the book trade to raise revenue, why not in any other business regarded as just and legitimate? Surely this is a departure from the sacred functions peculiar and proper to the Church of God. The true source of the needed revenues of the Church is the voluntary contributions of the people, and the methods to obtain them consist in such appeal as enlightens their sense of obligation and stimulates their liberality. This is a system which, while it opens up a method for an indefinite extension of revenue—an extension as wide as the capacity of the Church for enlightenment—it at the same time furnishes the occasion of progress in every subjective element of Christian experience, and of the constant influx of the blessings of Heaven. Why ignore this divinely appointed system of raising the money of the Church, and thereby not only fall upon one less effective, but deprive the Church of improvement and blessing, which the economy of God contemplates should be hers? Should it be said that this voluntary system is slow,

and that these are merely temporary expedients to supplement this system and to supply deficiencies, we reply that the only effect of these expedients is to divert attention from this, the rightful method of raising Church revenue, and, as far as they act, to create an obstruction to its adoption—the experience of the Southern Church, which has been without them, clearly proving that, so far from such expedients constituting a source of additional gain, as claimed for them, the revenue of the Church is larger, when without them, and when relying exclusively upon the spontaneous offerings of the people.

But, aside from these insuperable objections, we hold the literature function to be an instrumentality of usefulness too important and precious to be hampered and restricted by such an object. The circulation of books is a means of usefulness, as we have seen, second only to the pulpit, having the same objects in view, and contributing extensively and powerfully to their realization. Shall the Church adopt a policy in which she intentionally provides for the restriction and hinderance of that instrumentality? As well might she provide, for the sake of obtaining some subordinate end, for the curtailment of the operations of the ministry itself. It is as if she were to consent to realize less of the great ends of the gospel, for the sake of employing some minor instrumentality: it is as if she were to barter the salvation of souls for some empty species of Church paraphernalia: it is as if she were to consent to restrict the spread of the gospel itself, and the realization of its ultimate objects, for some object merely incident to, and not of it. No: even if Church revenue were only to be raised by trade and traffic, some other species of it should be adopted, leaving free this agency, so cardinal and leading in achieving the real ends of the Church. It is the extreme of folly to sacrifice the object itself for the attainment of that which is merely intended to promote it. But when there are other

methods of money-raising more efficient and more scriptural, then the employment of this agency, with that design, diminishing, as it does, its inherent capacity for usefulness, is essentially an unwise, if not a criminal policy.

Another cause of the failure in the Church to subject the literature function, in its fullest development, to her control, has been, especially in reference to the Southern Church, a want of the necessary capital. The publication of books, and consequently the supply of books, requires, of course, the outlay of capital; and that publication and supply necessary to provide all the books which the people throughout the entire Church might be induced to read, and which are demanded to give the literature function the greatest possible efficiency, necessarily require an immense capital. When we consider the amount of capital which has been employed to evolve the secular literature of the country, and to supply the people with it, we may form some idea of what is required to bring out religious literature to the highest limit of circulation of which it is susceptible, and of the insufficiency of that capital which the Church has heretofore employed in her book interest to provide for that circulation. Our country is broad and populous, and our people are emphatically a reading people; and to extend the business of providing religious literature to the utmost limit which the capacity for circulation will justify—in other words, to make the most of the literature function—the limited means heretofore invested in this business are wholly inadequate. The very considerable addition to the capital of the Southern Church invested in this business—the result of the settlement of the question of division with the Northern Church—will contribute greatly to a full expansion of our book interest. Still, with all that, when we consider the vast country to be supplied, and the number of books which, if by an actively aggressive system the markets of the country were positively forced, as is the case in respect

of the secular book trade, could be constantly thrown into circulation among all ranks of society, it is evident that there ought to be a yet much greater increase of pecuniary outlay in the book business, to secure an appropriation of its fullest capacity for usefulness.

But having obtained this large addition to its capital — itself sufficient to constitute a safe basis for future operations — let the former policy of the Church in reference to her book interest be changed, and instead of seeking to make it a source of revenue, let her paramount idea, as with the American Tract Society, be dissemination; and to realize this idea, let her aim be to furnish books at the lowest possible rates, securing this end in two ways: First, By publishing the books in the cheapest style compatible with convenience and durability; and, secondly, By discarding all idea of profits, except so far as may be necessary to sustain the business, and to circulate the books. Such a policy in itself will fulfill several of the most important conditions implied in the fullest development of the literature function. 1st, It will greatly increase the number of books provided by the Church for circulation: 2d, It will greatly increase the number who are brought within the range of ability to purchase books, and diminish the difficulty of all to purchase them; and 3d, Converting as it does the whole Book interest into a benevolent scheme, it will give the dissemination policy an aggressive character, and dispose its whole operations with reference to the furtherance of that policy.

The dissemination plan of the American Tract Society, in short, is the one we would commend to the adoption of the Methodist Church. And if this, under all the disabilities of mutual jealousy and apprehension, among those who manage it, and the suspicion and indifference with which it is often regarded by the various branches of the Christian

Church among whom it finds patronage, has been able to secure such an extended circulation of its books, and to attain such decided control over the religious reading of the country, what would a Book business on a scale commensurate with the power and numbers of the Methodist Church, and controlled with all the vigor which denominational spirit and energy could infuse, and enjoying the fullest confidence and coöperation of the entire Church, be able to accomplish, in the limits of that Church, when, like the Tract Society, its books were published on the cheapest scale, sold on the cheapest possible terms, and its entire energies were devoted to the one object of securing the widest possible circulation of a pure, unmixed religious literature. Such a system, on a scale of amplest means, and looking alone to the one end of diffusion, will give the highest efficiency to the literature function of the Church: it will secure a monopoly of the market; and in doing so will realize the two grand conditions implied in the full development of that function—the exclusive direction of the kind of religious reading of the people, and the supply of reading matter for the people to the full extent of their capacity to appropriate it.

Another step required to subordinate the literature function to the Church, and to give the fullest effect to it, is the establishment and universal circulation of the right kind of periodical literature. First, it is indispensable to secure to the religious masses an enlightened acquaintance with the progress of religious knowledge, and with the current history of the Church: Second, it is indispensable to the production and maintenance of an enlightened public spirit, especially in respect of the general benevolent enterprises of the Church: Third, it is more interesting and attractive to the multitude, and, consequently, enjoys more advantages to obtain universal circulation.

The objects to be accomplished by the periodical literature

of the Church are various, and its complete development, therefore, demands the fulfillment of several conditions.

1. There are certain objects of a general character, having in view the union, and harmony, and coöperation of the entire Church in its organic capacity, which it is the office of a periodical literature to accomplish: First, a general concurrence of sentiment everywhere, in respect of the cardinal doctrines of the Bible and the principles of Church economy: and, second, a broad connectional spirit—an enlarged and liberal feeling of mutual interest and regard, as between the various conferences, as between the different sections into which, from geographical or social causes, our Church territory is divided, and as it respects the entire country in all its parts; over which our Church organization has jurisdiction. Diffused as our membership is over a wide extent of territory, and composed as it is of many distinct communities, each of which is subject to its own peculiar influences, it is evident that in this age of intellectual independence, and of free-thinking—in this age so fruitful in extravagant speculation and wild opinion, when the conservative elements of the past and all that is authoritative in opinion have so little restraint upon the public mind—there ought to be some grand central organ which, established by the Church, and clothed with her authority, and under the ablest management which could be secured for it, should stand out as a general light for the entire Church, representing her fundamental principles both of doctrine and polity, and constituting a standard for the general regulation of her leading views and policy. Such an organ, patronized by the entire Church, would exercise a conservative influence upon the whole mass of the membership—would forestall the introduction of false and heretical views—and would powerfully contribute to the unity and harmony of the Church, in all those first principles, agreement upon which is essential to the integrity of the

communion. A quarterly periodical, such as our *Quarterly Review*, is just such an organ. Intended to give elaborate reviews of all that literature of the day, as it comes from the press, that relates to the principles and economy of Christianity, in which the false and dangerous is pointed out, and the true and valuable commended—devoted to the unfolding and the defence of great fundamental truth, and to the presentation and upholding of the true policy of the Church—if patronized by the entire Church of every section, its necessary effect would be to guard the communion everywhere from the error and delusion to which in this day it is so abundantly liable—to maintain in the public mind the just ascendancy of truth—and to secure unity among all Methodists in all that pertains to the doctrines, the spirit, and aims of Methodism.

Such a periodical, widely disseminated, will, in addition, improve the thinking and the substantial knowledge of the Church. Profoundly and elaborately discussing the great moral questions of the day, and presenting constantly learned and able treatises upon the philosophy and history of Christianity, the bare reading will be a discipline to the mind, improving its powers and directing them to right modes of investigation; while the knowledge conveyed will constitute the most valuable additions to the wealth of the mind.

But not only this general concurrence and harmony of opinion, in respect of the doctrines and polity of the Church, but likewise that other general object—a broad, connectional feeling—a sentiment of union and identity in interest and aim throughout the entire limits of the Church—must be sought and provided for through periodical literature. Methodism, whose organization contemplates such intimate connection between all sections over which it has jurisdiction, and whose efficient action demands the harmonious coöperation of all its parts—Methodism, which is but a system of

mutual dependences, must be pervaded and vitalized by such a spirit. Organizations which are loose in their structure, may exist without such unity and congeniality; but Methodism must be homogeneous in its elements — its people must be united — their interest and affection must be mutual everywhere. But while such prevailing sentiment is so indispensable, and there is much in the structure of Methodism to maintain it, yet growing out of a mutually repulsive tendency to some extent existing between its different conference districts, and largely existing between different sections, the result of geographical or political causes, there is an antagonism to it everywhere existing, which powerfully tends to overbear and suppress it. There needs to be, therefore, the employment by the Church of some instrumentality for the cultivation and maintenance of this indispensable element. A weekly periodical, intended for the whole Church, published at so cheap rate as to secure the patronage of the Church, would constitute such an agency. The organ of the whole Church, it would be conducted free from all local or sectional bias — it would be a medium through which every section of the Church would communicate with the public, and all could maintain a knowledge of the progress of events throughout the entire ecclesiastical jurisdiction. Its interest being the common interest of every part of the Church — its editorial matter and management would all be brought to bear upon those great objects, which tend to unite and concentrate the hosts of Methodism; and the entire Church patronizing it would necessarily feel the influence of its enlarged catholic spirit. Methodism feels the need of this connectional agency now. For while our existing papers are, in a measure, sectional, we have no great organ through which every part of the Church may communicate with each other, and by which the Church of every section may maintain a prompt and constant acquaintance with the affairs of

the whole Church. This weekly sheet would constitute such an organ, and while it would thus become a connectional tie, a grand centre whence would constantly proceed influences of common brotherhood tending to neutralize repellent forces, and to identify Methodists in one common spirit of union and harmonious coöperation, it would likewise be a constant source of enlarged and enlightened views, of encouragement and zeal throughout the entire Church.

2. Each of the various grand departments of Church enterprise ought to have its own periodical devoted to the exposition of the principles upon which it is based, and the presentation of the facts of its current history. The Church has already such an organ for the Sunday-school department in the Sunday-school Visitor. The missionary department especially ought to have its own periodical. The benefit of these specific organs is founded in the great principle of distribution, by which the sources of information, in respect of all these departments, are rendered more perfect, and, when considered in their sum, are made to constitute a complete system.

3. But in addition to these periodicals, which, representing interests equally applicable to all sections, are designed to have a circulation coëxistent with the entire limits of the Church, there are local or sectional papers, such as we now have in the family of Advocates, which, for many imperative reasons, ought to be maintained. First, such a system secures a larger circulation of periodical literature, and, consequently, multiplies the sources of information among the people: second, they furnish media for the diffusion of local information, which could not be supplied in the general papers: third, they constitute agents for upholding and advancing the local institutions of the Church: fourth, as media of communication with the public, they serve to develop the literary talent of the Church—to bring into available exercise its concentrated intelligence and zeal.

The reasons which make these local or sectional papers necessary, demand the multiplication of them to any degree compatible with self-support and efficient editorial ability. They must not be allowed to depreciate in their absolute value, or to become incapable of their own independent support, because of their multiplication ; but within these limits, we should hail with satisfaction, as an accession to the effective force of the Church, every addition to this class of periodical literature.

There is yet another measure necessary to render the literature function fully available to the Church, and thereby to complete its development, and that is the employment of her talent, in the production of religious literature. In any Church constituted of a membership so numerous and enlightened as is that of the Methodist Church, and among whom are so many of the agencies of intellectual activity and progress, there are necessarily to be found all the resources of an ample home literature. The advantages derived from a development of these resources are several. First, in respect of the authors, it would be the means of enlisting them more fully in the great objects of the Church—of bringing them more prominently forward in the prosecution of her interests, and thereby of augmenting her active, efficient force. Most certainly, this is a condition important to be fulfilled in any great Church. Every such Church, in all stages of her progress, either for defence, or as necessary to further growth, has need for the diffusion of light of a specific character, bearing upon particular points, and intended to meet peculiar or special emergencies. Literature is the most practicable agent for the dissemination of this light, and none but those who live in the bosom of the Church, who have imbibed her spirit and appreciate her actual state—none, in short, but home authors—are capable of this precise and specific employment of it. Secondly, the Methodist Church, from the

active character of its machinery, rapid in its movements and progressive in its growth, especially needs this agent for the spread of ideas, and the concentration of energy and purpose; and the absence of it has greatly hindered its advancement. Thirdly, it will contribute to secure our independence, in respect of agencies the most important—those which control the thinking and the opinion of the public, of all foreign influences, many of which are unfavorable to our principles and our interests; and by quickening the intellectual activity of the people, to elevate their intellectual condition, and augment their resources of usefulness. Fourthly, possessing advantages for attracting popular attention, home literature will be more generally read, and thereby the capabilities of the literature function will be extended.

The rapid advancement of intelligence and literary taste in the Methodist Church within recent years—the result of its educational and other enlightening agencies—has begun already to develop a home literature. Books and pamphlets—the product of home authors, and treating of subjects applicable to the condition and wants of our people—already have come forth from the press; and our periodical literature is cultivating the spirit of authorship, increasingly enriched as it is with their original productions. There ought to be a rapid advancement in this hopeful tendency. Within the limits of the Methodist communion, there exists even now a no inconsiderable share of such talent, as only needs to be given this direction to create at once an amount of home literature, not only in the highest degree honorable to the Church, but sufficient to realize all the high results of usefulness to which it is adapted. The Church should be impressed with the importance of such direction of her talent. Individuals, conscious of their ability to accomplish something with their pens for the development of the literature function, should feel the responsibility, remembering that to fail in

effort in this department, however active in other respects, would still subject them to the condemnation of him who is recorded to have buried his talent. The Church should adopt some efficient plan to encourage her authors by publishing their productions—such, at least, as promise usefulness—and of providing for their sale and circulation among the people. Her policy should be to look with the utmost favor upon this most important feature, as an essential element of her literature function. She should seek actively to throw the full weight of her sanction and influence in its favor, and thus, by the removal of those natural obstructions always existing to this particular direction of talent, and lending her hearty coöperation in all the steps necessary to the practical elicitation of it, bring out and encourage whatever of resource it may contain for the realization of all the results of an elevated and ample home literature.

But that the Church may enjoy the full benefit of the literature function, it is not enough that she thus provides the literature needed, but as she is designed to be aggressive, and all of her instrumentalities should partake of that character, she must herself likewise assume the agency for securing its actual dissemination among the people. Simply to publish books and periodicals, and to rely for their circulation upon the actual application of the people for them, would be to restrict that circulation to the more enlightened and zealous, while the ignorant and the indifferent—the class most to be benefitted—uninformed of their existence, and of the modes of access to them, and, at best, careless in regard to them—would derive no direct benefit from them. If the Church, therefore, would make the most of her literature function, she must proceed a step further, and by some general plan, accommodated to the circumstances of the people, herself induce the dissemination of her literature.

In organizing such a plan, the first step should be to estab-

lish as many depositories in convenient localities, as could be made consistent with the financial interests of the general Concern, whence all the various literature of the Church could be obtained. The multiplication of points at which books can be seen increases the number who see and know of them, as well as the facilities for obtaining them—conditions which must necessarily result in their increased circulation. Such an arrangement gives to the book trade an aggressive character, the effect of which is to enlarge and extend its business. And though such a policy may involve an increase of expenditure, yet it is an increase which, with prudent selection of points for depositories, and wise management, would be more than compensated by the increased income resulting from the increased sales. The great object of our book interest—the dissemination of sanctified literature—has been greatly defeated by the contracted scale upon which it has been conducted. Business men—conducting a business of this kind for secular ends, enjoying the patronage and friendly coöperation of so numerous and extended a class of society—would never have restricted their centres of business to two or three localities; but they would have multiplied these centres until, by occupying every important market of the country, they had, as the result of their own active seeking, covered the whole country, and appropriated its utmost capacity to their own patronage. Such a policy would be prudent and safe with the Church, and as such is imperatively demanded by all the considerations which give value to her literature function.

But in addition to this feature in the plan for distribution which has a bearing upon the specific result, though decided yet indirect and general, there needs to be some arrangement by which to bring to bear the energies of the Church upon the masses of the people in a manner more direct and special. To effect that arrangement, let each circuit and station, or as

many of the benevolent of each as choose to coöperate, form themselves into a joint-stock company, each member taking any number of shares, subject to withdrawal at option, (on the condition of having the amount subscribed refunded in books,) securing thereby a fund to be invested in books selected under the direction of a book committee. To render this scheme in the highest degree benevolent and useful, the feature might be incorporated of extensive donations to the poor, the diminution in the fund thus caused to be supplied by occasional renewals of subscriptions. Such would be especially practicable in communities of wealth and enlightened benevolence. But if this more expensive scheme be objected to, let the fund originally raised be rendered permanent by the sale of the books on such terms as will cover costs and losses from occasional gifts. Let these books be kept in some designated place as their known depository. In most of our towns and cities, which, as being most frequented, are the most appropriate places of depository, there are Methodist merchants who would be glad to further this enterprise, by making their stores the places of deposit; but if such facilities be wanting, the parsonages might be used as suitable to this purpose. A comparatively small capital would be sufficient to maintain a constant, adequate supply for any of our communities, as frequent reinvestments would make the entire amount constantly available.

The difficulty of access to them, under the present condition of things, prevents many every where from furnishing themselves more abundantly with religious books—especially since the easiness of access to secular literature secures to it so many advantages for monopolizing the reading taste. It has operated against the proper furniture of Sunday-school libraries. But the adoption of this plan will obviate this difficulty, and thus greatly increase the dissemination of books. This indefinite multiplication of points at which books may

be seen and purchased will greatly increase the demand for them, and vast numbers will be circulated which, without this convenience of access, would never have found their way among the people.

But the scheme of the Church ought not to stop here. It must be rendered more positive and aggressive still. There would still be many who, never coming into contact with or within the immediate sphere of these depositories, would continue to live without the books. This would be especially true of the ignorant and indifferent class, who are indeed the most important objects of this dissemination agency. To reach these, each of these joint-stock companies must have one or more agents for the dissemination of the books within the limits of its jurisdiction. Our preachers, and especially our junior preachers, are the proper persons to become these agents, their vocation furnishing them ample opportunities for such intercourse with every class of people as the proper discharge of this agency would require, while the nature of the employment specially accords with their own great mission of spreading Christian knowledge among men.

The plan here proposed is fundamentally the same with the auxiliary associations of the American Bible Society: the only difference being, that while these associations propose only the distribution of Bibles, these joint-stock companies contemplate likewise the dissemination of all the various classes of sanctified literature. These latter, therefore, are recommended in that they may be made to aid the objects of the former. Indeed, in many instances, it might be practicable to blend them: the same agent acting for both, by an increase of responsibility, the chances are increased of a faithful discharge of the duty. The great success of these auxiliary Bible associations shows the practicability of this plan for the dissemination of a general religious literature, especially as, under the practical management of the preachers and Church authorities, this latter

would enjoy increased advantages of vigor and uniformity in its operations.

There is required to put this scheme into practical operation, in most of the stations and circuits, nothing more than some leading mind to call public attention to it, and to give direction in the early stages of the movement. There is already existing in most of our communities whatever of public spirit and available pecuniary resource may be necessary to the efficient and sustained prosecution of this enterprise; and it only requires some movement of organization and concert to embody them in suitable action. Let it be the recognized policy of the Church, adopted as such in her organic capacity, that the preachers in charge, under the direction of the presiding elder, shall be required, as a constituent part of their regular work, to make the necessary effort to originate these companies, and when their origination is secured, to lend their influence and coöperation to sustain their existence, and to give energy and success to their operations. Such a policy, vigorously prosecuted, will fulfil all the conditions necessary to secure the establishment and success of this book disseminating scheme in well-nigh all our fields of labor.

Succinctly stated, the advantages of this scheme are these: It will secure within the limits of each community, and therefore at convenient points, a depository abundantly supplied with all the various books its wants require; it will enlist the enterprise of the benevolent, whose coöperation will be a blessing to them and an accession to the effective force of the Church; it will enable the preachers to coöperate in the plan, and that without personal pecuniary risk; and it will constitute a systematic, efficient mode by which the Church may bring to bear directly her highest energies in the widest spread of a sanctified, improving literature.

But in respect of those sections in which, from inability or indisposition, this scheme may not be employed, there is

another method by which it is practicable for the Church to act with much efficiency in the dissemination of books, and that is, the sale of the books by the preachers themselves on their own responsibility—the terms of sale to them by the general Concern being so arranged that every possible facility and inducement will be afforded them to enter into and vigorously prosecute the business. This will be nothing more than a return to the old plan of book distribution, which was abandoned in consequence of the removal of the necessary facilities, by the unfortunate course of the Northern Church. That plan, as then practiced, accomplished much. Indeed, most of the religious books now found in the libraries of Methodists were obtained under the operation of that plan. Since its abandonment, there has been comparatively little addition to the standard religious literature in the hands of the people. But by the offer of better terms to the preachers, which, under the scheme we propose, of publishing books exclusively with reference to circulation and not to income, would be entirely practicable, and by the adoption by the Church of all suitable methods to impress upon the ministry the great importance of book distribution, and the responsibility resting upon them to make it a constituent part of their plans of usefulness, this method might be rendered more than ever efficient—indeed, productive of results insuring the utmost success to the literature function.

But it is not merely by these plans for forcing the circulation of religious books, that the literature function is to be rendered in the highest degree available: to complete the work the same system and energy must be employed for extending the circulation of the periodical literature of the Church. It is plain that that circulation will greatly depend upon the practical effort made to secure it, and therefore upon the efficiency of the agents ramifying the country engaged in efforts to further it. The preachers, therefore, who in their fields of

labor do thus cover the entire limits of the country, might be made to constitute the most perfect system of agency for securing the circulation of the periodicals of the Church which it is possible to create. With this immense advantage thus afforded by our peculiar system of itinerancy, there is required but one condition, the hearty coöperation of the preachers to extend the circulation of our periodical literature to the utmost capacity of the country, and thereby to realize its fullest capabilities of usefulness. The proper use of the methods suggested for the distribution of books will itself, by the direction of the attention of the ministers generally to the value of the literature function, naturally tend to awaken their zeal in behalf of our periodicals, while the literary taste which will be cultivated by these books among the masses will awaken in them a spontaneous demand for this class of literature. But, in addition, much may be done to stimulate the great body of the ministry to this required coöperation, by the constant avowal by the Church, in her organic capacity, of this system of coöperation as her recognized policy, impressing it thereby upon the preachers individually as a part of their regular work, and her adoption of all available methods to bring to bear her authority to insure on the part of the preachers the regular discharge of the duty.

The Methodist Church, from her organization, has peculiar facilities for that concert of action—that harmonious and yet vigorous coöperation throughout her entire limits—necessary to insure everywhere the greatest activity of the literature function. A wise apprehension of the ends which it proposes and the adoption by the Church organically of well-arranged method are all that are necessary to obtain such aid, from machinery already existing, as will give the utmost practical vigor everywhere to this cardinal instrumentality. In this day, when the further progress of the Church so much

demands it, when the efficient force of the Church may be so much augmented by it, and when the openings for its employment are universally so abundant, the Church must arouse herself to its complete development. Indifference, neglect, is guilt, and, more fatal still, is ruinous.

SECTION IV

THE ELEEMOSYNARY FUNCTION.

THERE is another department of Church enterprise, which may be denominated the poor-helping, or eleemosynary function, which has perhaps never been properly appreciated by the Church, but whose development, having now become practicable, is demanded, as well that she may fulfil her appointed obligations, as that she may increase her capabilities for usefulness.

Charity to the destitute, both as that signifies a feeling of kindness and that feeling developed in suitable action for their relief, is an essential feature, a constituent element, of the religion of the Bible. The Scriptures declare, "The poor shall never cease out of the land"—saying, "Thou shalt open thy hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy in thy land." "Blessed is he that considereth the poor: the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble." "He that oppresseth the poor reproacheth his Maker, but he that honoreth him hath mercy on the poor." "Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house—when thou seest the naked that thou cover him, and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?" Paul says, in reference to the wish of his brethren, "James, Cephas, and John," "only they would that we should remember the poor, the same which I also was forward to do."

Our Saviour himself says, "when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind, and thou shalt be

blessed ; for they cannot recompense thee, for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just." He also announced it as a distinguishing characteristic of the gospel that the "poor have the gospel preached unto them." The spirit and principle thus inculcated through the Scriptures, and which our Saviour reiterated in his own teachings, he himself extensively practiced while among men, and thus afforded in his own example the highest proof that charity to the poor is an essential characteristic of Christianity.

But if it be so, then it is evident that the Church, which is nothing more than an external organization for the development among men of what Christianity is, must in her arrangements not only recognize this element, but measures must be brought to bear for its actual realization—in other words, that such action by the Church in her organic capacity as will contribute to its realization, must be regarded as a true and proper function of the Church. ,

The atonement of Christ is so comprehensive in its connections with man, as that it interests him, not only in certain aspects of man, but in every aspect of him, whether physical or spiritual, whether of time or eternity. Physical sufferings, therefore, the destitution and bodily wretchedness of men, are objects of the commiseration of the Saviour, and fall within the scope of the blessed gospel, which he has provided for the relief of the human family ; and Christianity, which is but the spirit of Christ and of his gospel realized in the life of man, is a law of kindness in man to man, as well to their bodies as their souls, and exhibits itself in the world in kind ministrations to the real wants of the universal man, as well those which refer to his physical being as those which refer to his immortal soul. To restrict the energies of the Church, therefore, to the spiritual interests of the human family, is to fail to embrace, in its general scheme, a wide department of objects referred to and comprehended in the great scheme

of the gospel. To minister to the destitute, to provide for the necessitous and helpless, is, in a fundamental sense, no less a function of the Church than that higher object of winning souls to Christ.

Charity to the helpless is a dictate of true piety—an indispensable concomitant of a properly trained Christian experience, which itself is convincing proof of its appointment, as a cardinal duty of Christianity, and, if it can be furthered by such policy, of the obligation of the Church in her organic capacity to assume the business of it.

The Church of God is an institution of benevolence, having for its object the removal of human wretchedness and the promotion of human happiness; and it but accords with its genius—it is but in harmony with its spirit and aim—that it should be constituted the great agency of society to supply the requisite aid to the helpless.

But that charity to the poor is a function of the Church is still further evinced by other considerations.

Such a specific direction of Church agency will, while it fulfills the important condition of meeting the physical wants of the needy, greatly contribute to that higher end, their moral elevation and salvation. This it will do in several ways. First, the relief afforded, and the kindness exhibited in administering it, will naturally turn the attention of the beneficiary to the cause of the Church, and inspire such a sense of obligation and of gratitude, that cannot fail to awaken in him convictions of the divinity and excellence of Christianity, and open a way to such direct appliances of the gospel, as will lead to an embracement of it, or, if already embraced, to a closer union with it. The pleasing aspect in which deeds of disinterested benevolence represent the Christian cause to persons already kindly disposed, by being themselves the objects of them, will powerfully contribute to the strength of its influence over them. Such deeds of kindness bring the

objects of them in relations to the Church that secure to her a claim upon them and power over them, in the highest degree conservative of their virtue, and favorable to their salvation. Secondly, the fact of relief and liberation from the doubt and dreadful apprehension inseparable from a life of squalor—of elevation to freedom and hope—especially under the circumstances of kindness and attention which have secured to them these blessings—is favorable to their moral improvement, to their turning themselves to those higher objects connected with their immortal interests. Thirdly, that zeal for the salvation of the race which true Christians always realize, but which will be specially felt and exercised in behalf of the poor, in these processes of ministration to their physical wants, will take advantage of the opportunities thus afforded to make many successful efforts for the moral improvement of this class. Christians, trained to charity to the poor, will soon feel that that charity is but designed to be subsidiary to the great end of the spiritual good of its objects, and the opportunities of access to and contact with this class, thus enjoyed, will become the occasions of earnest effort to supply the higher wants of the soul; and the influence they have gained by these deeds of charity will render them the instruments most likely to succeed in this higher, more glorious mission. The whole sphere of the moral interests of this class, thus coming under, in this fulfilment of the poor-helping function, the supervision of the Church, their moral state will be guarded, their improvement will be nurtured and encouraged, and every facility will be afforded for the enjoyment of such religious privileges as will in a high degree contribute to their moral stability and progress.

Again: this direction of the energies of the Church will greatly contribute to her own subjective improvement. The performance of duty, and especially of duty like this, involving self-denial and constancy of effort, will, in virtue of God's

own economy, necessarily be the occasion reactively of divine favor and blessing.

But it will open up a field for action, in which faith, and love, and zeal, and, in some sense, all the subjective graces of Christianity, may find freest exercise and opportunities for expansion and enlargement. Here, by constant opportunities for a contrast of condition, the heart receives daily lessons of humility, of dependence upon and obligations to God. Here it becomes impressed with the paltriness of earth, and feels the force of the truth, that there is nothing valuable but heaven. Here it learns to place a proper estimate upon earthly wealth, and the importance and manner of such use of it as contributes, not specifically to mere selfish gratification, but directly and intentionally to the glory of God. Here the heart is softened—is chastened—the affections are cultivated, and all the finer sensibilities of the soul—the true basis of heart piety—are brought out and cherished. Here the spirit of usefulness is educated and strengthened, and the whole man is subjected to the control of the noblest aspirations of good to others. Self-denial is cultivated, an enlarged public spirit is nurtured, and benevolence becomes the predominant trait of character. Indeed, in this field, the Church finds a school in which she may be educated to deadness to earth, and to increased devotion to spiritual things—to all those nobler aspirations of benevolence and usefulness which, while they are the occasions of her own constant improvement, insures yet greater efficiency and more rapid progress in every department of her enterprise.

“The poor shall never cease out of the land.” “The poor ye always have with you.” The world, which was intended as a discipline for eternity, would, perhaps, be without one of the most important elements to constitute it such, if without the constant presence of the poor—so important are the relations of the Church to this class for the proper growth of

many of those subjective graces which make up a symmetrical and complete Christian experience ; and it was with this reference, doubtless, that that economy was intended to be fixed, in which the poor are continued a distinct and permanent class.

Those Christians, the most distinguished for the fullness of their Christian experience, the completeness of their Christian character, and the power of their religious influence, have been specially marked for their charity to the poor ; and close examination would show that the training they received in this department of Christian exercise contributed much to the perfection attained.

A system of charity suitably adapted to all classes of the needy, arranged by the Church, and practiced by Christians everywhere, will greatly increase the influence of the Church among those without her pales, and thereby her aggressive capabilities. This would be its necessary effect, because of the increased energy in her agencies, which its practical execution implies. But more particularly, because, first, of the increased evidence of the divinity of Christianity, which this exhibition of it will afford ; and, secondly, of the pleasing, attractive aspect in which it will represent Christianity to the world.

It is no inconsiderable evidence of the fact, that the Church ought to assume the business of providing for the needy, that the general sense of all acquainted with the genius of Christianity seems to assign this to her as one of her own proper functions, insomuch that failure in this department is generally regarded as an obvious inconsistency—an incongruity between theory and practice, which has operated to the hinderance of the Christian cause.

The poor and needy, it is true, are not wholly neglected in our country. The asylums, hospitals, houses of refuge, the municipal regulations for the protection and assistance of

these classes, the custom of almsgiving, all attest the existence and the exercise of the principle of charity in American society. And though these external indications of this principle are independent of any immediate church agency, yet it is but fair to admit that they are indebted for their origin to the teachings of Christianity abroad among the people, and to the social progress which, through these teachings, has been achieved. Still, not being the immediate results of church operation — not arising avowedly out of Christianity as a part of its own scheme — they are attributed to the action of other agencies — they are credited to other influences ; and the Church loses all the direct advantages which these operations of this principle are capable reflexively of conferring upon her, and in their stead experiences the consequences, in public estimation, which shortcoming and failure in these respects are calculated to entail upon her. Moreover, attributable as they are to influences developing themselves both accidentally and incidentally, and without any controlling organism to embody and concentrate them — aside from their inability to realize the religious results which Christianity contemplates through them — they cannot be conducted so efficiently and successfully, in view even of their temporal bearings, as when controlled and directed by the agency of the Church.

It is not enough that the blind, the deaf and dumb, the insane, the orphan, and the destitute poor, have their physical wants supplied. If this were all, the State, or any mere secular association, would be a competent agency ; but these wants must be supplied in obedience to Christian dictation and sanction : they must be supplied with such reference and under such circumstances as make the occasion, directly upon those the objects of the beneficence, and indirectly upon others, one of religious blessing and benefit — a state of things only to be realized as the Church herself, through her own

instrumentalities, has the entire management of this business.

It has been the tardiness and failure of the Church that has necessitated the interposition of State authorities and individuals to provide for the wants of the needy. Such, however, is not a proper function of the State, and can only be justified by that necessity which the failure of the proper instrumentality has created. The interposition of State action in behalf of this class argues neglect and criminal shortcoming by the Church. It is an abandonment by the Church—a relinquishment to others—of what properly belongs to herself—involving on her part, both a recreancy to duty and the loss of a powerful instrumentality of usefulness. The Church cannot delegate, or allow silently to pass from herself to others, what properly is her own. Such a course, while it will always result in a less efficient execution of the function delegated, will be attended by loss and diminished efficiency to the Church herself.

Whatever, then, may be the capabilities of the State, or any mere secular combination for providing amply for all the physical wants of the needy, the Church cannot surrender the care of this class to such authorities. The State, made up as it is of the people, has really no more advantages for the creation of the necessary fund for these objects than has the Church, supposing that the latter uses the necessary energy and zeal in the right education and direction of the people in behalf of these interests. Indeed, the right training of the people—which it would require, by suitable effort, no very protracted period to secure—would elevate them to a position of liberality, in which their own voluntary offerings would be a never-failing supply of all that is necessary to sustain every agency for the relief of the unfortunate. So that, while, on the plan of the Church, all that the State can accomplish will be realized, it would be attended by advantages of religious

benefit to all classes, which the operations of the State will totally fail to compass.

While, therefore, we pretend not to say, that in the absence of suitable and sufficient action by the Church to meet the wants of this class, it is not right for the State, or any other agency, to seek, as far as its functions will allow, to supply that action; yet it is an unwise policy, both as to the duty of the Church in the premises, the interest of Christianity, and the manner in which the object itself is accomplished, to rely upon any other than Church and Christian agency in general. to dispense the charities needed by society. The Church herself should assume the exclusive management of the poor, as one of her legitimate functions, and never cease in the extension of her efforts, until, having embraced in the sphere of her operations every object of charity, she has thoroughly monopolized this department of benevolence and usefulness.

Assuming, then, the care of the needy and destitute to be a proper function of the Church, its right development implies several things.

1. The establishment and maintenance of as many institutions for the insane, the blind, the deaf and dumb, and all who from physical deformity and imperfection especially need the charity of the public, as these classes require for their suitable care and protection. In many of the States there are institutions of these kinds, established by the munificence of individual Christians, and conducted under Christian auspices. But these ought to be so far multiplied as to embrace all of these classes existing in the country. This can be done, if suitable interest be felt, and proper action be taken by the general Church. The same feeling which in these cultivated Christians prompted the establishment of these could, by suitable Church action, be infused generally, and made to exhibit itself in such combined, concentrated

power as would soon result in such provision for these classes as their numbers and wants require.

But it is not enough that these institutions be established in sufficient numbers: suitable exertion must be made to gather in these unfortunate ones from all parts of the country, that all everywhere may share their blessings. The Church will enjoy peculiar advantages for doing this, for the zeal in behalf of this object which right education will awaken will prompt the membership everywhere to right effort, while, diffused in every precinct of the land, they will have every opportunity for the practical execution of that effort in finding out and sending up to these institutions every subject embraced within their design. Moreover, founded and conducted under Christian auspices, these institutions will enjoy a degree of public confidence of which they would be destitute under any other agency, and which itself would be well calculated to induce the patronage of the whole country. There is a prejudice among many—a want of hearty coöperation among the public—in reference to all enterprises of this kind, conducted by the State, which will ever disqualify them for accomplishing the entire purpose of their design. Indeed, there is a want of public sympathy in their behalf, of appreciation of and satisfaction with them, when sustained by the State, which is not experienced when conducted by the Church—which, while it shows that the Church can make these more useful, demonstrates that not the State, but the Church is the proper authority for the establishment and maintenance of these institutions.

Let the Church, then, commit herself, by her own formal enactments, to the duty of assuming a suitable provision for these unfortunate classes, and direct her organic energies to the right education of the membership in respect to it. Such a course, at no distant period, would result in such enlist-

ment of general attention to these interests, as would secure, under the superintendence of the Church, all the provision the country demands.

2. Some general system of action for the protection and right rearing of helpless orphans. In almost all communities, and especially in our cities, children are to be found who, by the death of parents, are destitute of the means of support; or, if not entirely, are without such guardianship as is necessary for their right rearing. What Christian heart, of right views and sympathies, has not been deeply moved at the spectacle presented by the condition of these, as thus found in almost every neighborhood of the land? Much of the crime perpetrated in community originates among those who, in the period of their rearing, belonged to this unfortunate class, and from it have sprung those who constitute the most vile and debased of society. Not merely Christian sympathy, therefore, but those great objects, the prevention of crime and the moral improvement of society, demand such provision for them as will meet their physical wants and insure their right moral training.

Every circuit or station ought to feel itself, under the general superintendence of its pastors, bound to seek out and provide for such of this class as are within its own limits. It might, through its quarterly conference, have a standing committee, who should assume the general management of this business, conducting it on a plan embracing two general features: First, the obtaining for these orphans, in those cases whose circumstances called for it, homes in suitable families, on such terms as will insure their comfortable support and proper training. In respect of a large class of these orphans, this would be the most desirable and practicable scheme. It is one in which there would be required no pecuniary outlay, and which, too, would meet all the conditions involved. It is one, moreover, which requires for its

practical execution nothing more than the earnest agency of leading men in the community — which condition the organization indicated would precisely fulfill. Second, the supply of such means of protection and support to the remaining class, whose circumstances would not make proper their distribution among families, as are necessary to save them from suffering and from degradation — these means to be obtained by the voluntary contributions of the people, under a well-digested and judiciously conducted system of revenue for this praiseworthy purpose. In some of our cities, orphan asylums have been established by individual munificence. These are proper enough, especially in the larger cities, where the claims of this class are more numerous and pressing. They should, however, be used merely as places of temporary residence for these unfortunate ones — as mere places of rendezvous, whence, under this system of distribution, they should be taken as soon as circumstances allow, and, under the direction of Church agencies, placed out in suitable private families to be trained and educated. These establishments might be multiplied. This, however, is hardly to be expected, except as enlightened and liberal individual enterprise may prompt to their foundation, instances of which would be much more frequent than in the past, under that more enlightened state of public opinion, which would ensue from this development by the Church of her eleemosynary function, upon which we so earnestly insist.

3. Some system of action by which the physical wants of the destitute poor, not included in the classes before specified, might be so far met as to save them from the ills of positive suffering and degradation. In our country, where the means of comfortable livelihood are so abundant, there are, perhaps, none, of good health and sound mind, who are properly objects of charity. That class of strolling beggars, of both sexes, who have robust health and ample

ability, by devoting themselves to some industrial pursuit, to maintain themselves, have no claims upon the charity of the public, and ought, by finding no favor of this kind, to be forced to some more honorable vocation. But still, even in our own highly favored country, and especially in our larger cities, there are to be found many widows, many infirm from age or feeble health, who, unable to support themselves, are properly objects of charity. These are scattered in almost every community, and the Church, to meet her obligations to the poor, must develop her system to provide for them.

Every Methodist society should organize itself into an association for the support of this class of the poor, within its particular limits. It should be the privilege of any member to report any case of destitution, at any regular meeting of the society; and it should then be determined, by majority vote, whether such person or persons should be placed upon the list to be supplied by charity, and also how much should be appropriated, and the manner of the appropriation. If the general society be too unwieldy for these details, they might be intrusted to a committee, under its general supervision. The means thus appropriated should be raised by voluntary contributions: in the first place, from the society itself. Most usually, in our country, especially outside of our cities, the number of these charity objects is so small, and the supply needed is so limited, that, without a heavy burden of tax, each society may support within itself its own poor. But where the burden is so heavy, because of the poverty of the membership, or the relative amount of the destitution existing, that the society itself is unable to bear it, it might be a regulation to appeal at stated periods for help to the public congregation: the earnest given by the society of its own liberality, and the general direction of public attention to the claims of the poor, by this declared policy of the Church, being well calculated to enlist the coöperation of the entire

community, such appeal would not be in vain. But since, in those neighborhoods where this charity class is most numerous, there is generally least ability in the membership to meet this demand, it might be a further regulation of each circuit, under the direction of the quarterly conference, that collections should be taken up in all the societies, to be appropriated to the assistance of those societies thus heavily taxed, so that by bringing the wealthier societies to the aid of the weaker, an equality would exist among all in the burden involved, and the poor in all parts of the circuit would be assured of relief and comfort.

This system, in addition to the advantages it secures to the Church reflexively, and the benefit it confers directly upon the poor, has this to recommend it: it applies not generally so that in its operation it necessarily embraces many of the unworthy, as is the case unavoidably with all plans conducted by the State, whereby poverty is rewarded and idleness encouraged; but it is a discriminating scheme, applying itself specifically only, causing every case to be scrutinized, guarding thereby against imposition, and excluding from the list of the aided all others but such as truly have need of charity.

4. Such methods of social intercourse as develop those amenities and kindly offices toward the poor generally, that are so well calculated to ameliorate their condition, to stimulate them to improvement, and to diffuse happiness among them. First, by visiting them, and ministering to their wants in sickness. In this association, into which we propose each society shall organize itself, to provide for its poor, it might be a regulation that, at every meeting, the question should be asked, Who are sick? The information, given in response, would enable each member to know at any time who are sick in his neighborhood, and by adopting a rule formally recognizing the duty of each and all to visit the sick, the habit

might be cultivated, under the pressure of enlightened conscience, of discharging this duty, especially among the poor—the class most needing comfort and assistance in such condition. A regulation might exist, providing in extreme cases, for an appropriation to the sick poor, such as would be required to meet pressing exigencies. There are associations, outside the Church, in which these regulations for visiting and providing for the poor in seasons of sickness are cardinal features. The practicability of the scheme is thus demonstrated. Let not the Church suffer any longer the reproach of being excelled, in this great principle of practical Christianity, by human associations. Let not the Church allow herself to be a practical exemplification of the truth of the charge, that the children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light. Secondly, by giving, as often as possible, a practical exhibition of a willingness to further them in business, and to encourage them in laudable efforts to rear their children, and to improve their general condition. Thirdly, by such kind attentions and gentle demeanor in all social intercourse as will win their confidence, encourage their self-respect, and stimulate them to good conduct and honorable aims. The poor are often by their circumstances—by defeat and disappointment—discouraged, despondent. How much would a kind word, an encouraging look, a friendly act, from the elevated and the good, contribute to relieve their despair, to inspire with hope, and to urge to renewed exertion. The influential and the good know not how their indifference often blights the hopes and energies of the poor; or how kindness and encouragement, as manifested in the cheap and easy form of the mere manner of social intercourse, would tend to dissipate despair, and to animate to enterprise and effort. Christians may do much to elevate and relieve, in the mere manner of

their intercourse with them; and a form of usefulness, so easy and cheap, they are bound to take pains to employ.

Attention thus shown, kindness thus manifested, by Christians, and with Christian views, will be appreciated, and will contribute more, perhaps, to win this class to religion than would any other instrumentality. Such a course opens up a way of access to the affections—it insures gratitude and confidence, that will give to Christians an influence over them which will almost certainly result in their yielding to the dominion of Christianity. Out of the social relations of life, therefore, there may be derived instrumentalities of benefit to this class which the Christian Church has never appreciated, but which the important objects of the Church, as well as imperative obligation, require to be at once employed.

It was the design of Mr. Wesley that the class-meeting system should constitute an organization through which the Church should execute her obligations of charity to the poor. In the original constitution of that system, Methodism recognized the poor-helping function, and sought a suitable provision for its practical development. But, in the purely spiritual aims of the Church, to which Methodism soon came to consecrate itself exclusively, this great feature of the class-meeting system was practically lost sight of and in a great degree abandoned. There can be no doubt that there is an adaptation in this system to all the purposes of machinery for the dispensation of the practical charities of the Church that is truly admirable, and that exhibits the wisdom of Mr. Wesley, in the great work of Church organization, in an eminent degree. The times and the demands of usefulness call for a restoration to the class-meeting system of this cardinal feature of its original constitution. This done, under wise and efficient management, the chief

conditions of the Church's eleemosynary function will be fulfilled

5. The bestowment upon poor youth of uncommon merit of the opportunities for obtaining liberal education. The importance of this course of action to the highest efficiency of the educational function has already been stated; but the obligations to it arise more immediately out of the nature of the Church's eleemosynary function. Many poor youth there are, of endowments which need only the cultivation of liberal education, to render them capable of highest usefulness. How easy would it be for those in independent pecuniary circumstances, either singly or in association, to advance to these youth the requisite funds to obtain their education in our colleges, on the condition stipulated, if desired, that when their course was completed, they should, by devoting themselves to some useful employment—teaching for example—refund the amount thus advanced. Such acts of benevolence would confer a benefit upon those the objects of them, of inestimable value: they would operate as a motive among the youth of the poor to meritorious conduct, that thereby they might recommend themselves to the confidence of the good: they would multiply the number of educated men in the country; and, more important still, they would secure additions to the educated talent employed in the ministry or in highly useful pursuits, and they will be an outlet through which the faith, the love, and zeal of the benevolent may find enlargement and expansion, contributing to religious growth and to the production of right Christian character.

Already has the Church, in some few instances, begun to develop this feature of the eleemosynary function. In some places it has been attempted by associations, chiefly of benevolent females, who have desired to make themselves useful to the Church and society. In perhaps all our Methodist colleges there are to be found, all the time, young

men who are receiving their education through the voluntary aid of the benevolent. All over the land now are to be found those who were thus educated; and, perhaps without exception, they are honorable men, and devoted to useful employments. Many of them are actively engaged in the ministry, and others prominent as useful and highly respectable citizens. Indeed, it may be safely affirmed, that experience thus far demonstrates that those thus educated almost invariably make the most enterprising; laborious, and useful men which our country affords. Here, then, is presented a field for usefulness to which the men of means in our Church are urgently invited—one, in which, while wealth may be employed most usefully, benevolence may find the largest room for exercise, piety may enjoy the richest privileges for enlargement and growth, and the country and the Church be most efficiently served; yet there is no loss, even in a pecuniary sense, to any one. Here capital may be so invested, as that, while it subserves the purposes of Heaven—harmonizes with the designs of God as to its use—it is yet profitable to the owner, as to both worlds, paying back, in kind, and making the owner safe pecuniarily, and laying up for him immortal treasure in heaven.

A proper development of the eleemosynary function is based upon the right education of the individual conscience among the masses. No mere system of external machinery, no mere outward organization, will suffice to secure the result, unless they are founded upon and sustained by a broad principle of enlightened benevolence, universally diffused among the people. While, therefore, we recommend the adoption by the Church, in its organic capacity, of the proper external machinery for the execution of this function, yet we suggest, as necessary to give movement and efficiency to this, the use of the pulpit and press, and every other agency calculated to enlighten and educate the public mind and secure its own

spontaneous coöperation in behalf of the entire sphere of these duties to the poor. The action of the Church, in her organic capacity, going forth as an expression of the highest authority in favor of this policy, will itself be light which, by gradually diffusing itself among the masses, will contribute much to the general cultivation of right views and sentiments. The Church, therefore, can have no option in this matter, but, as well that she may set in motion this system of machinery, as that she may secure these important results of general enlightenment, she is bound to take at once prompt and decisive action.

So indifferent has the Church in her organic capacity been in the past, in respect of this great department of duty, and so limitedly has the mind of the masses been directed to it, so comprehensive is the system of action necessary to its right occupancy, that we cannot hope, under the most auspicious beginning, for a speedy full development of this function. We can only hope, for the present, to give organization and form to the movement—to provide and bring into action such influences as will give motion to the Church in that direction—leaving it to time and the energetic action of these agencies gradually to discipline the Church to a full discharge of her duties to the poor.

SECTION V.

THE MISSIONARY FUNCTION.

MISSIONARY as is the spirit of Christianity and the grand design of the Christian Church, the comparatively recent period at which the Church began to recognize and respond to the claims of missions, and the inadequacy of the effort even now contributed, both in respect of the resources of the Church and the demands of the world, might, to a superficial observer, seem inexplicable, yet it requires for its explanation no admission incompatible with missionary obligation, with the completeness of the gospel system, or with the efficiency of the Most High in the accomplishment of his sacred purposes. It is a trained, overflowing piety, which originates and sustains an actual sense of missionary obligations; and the energies of the Christian system had first to employ themselves in the inculcation of rudiments, in the settlement of preliminaries, and the reduction of masses to the sway of cardinal truth, before these, the ripe fruits of right education and experience, could be realized. The missionary spirit is but the resultant of all the forces of Christianity, in full activity and tension, and it is not, therefore, until truth in its amplitude and entireness is allowed its own unobstructed influence, that this its last, highest development is exhibited.

The seventeenth century marks the beginning of the transition of the Church from her pupilage, her rudimental career, into that fullness of enjoyment and activity, the essential prerequisite of missionary enterprise—a transition which has ever since been going on, and is still incomplete. The efforts

of the Roman Catholics, previous to that era, were but a species of propagandism, the result of a corrupt ambition to extend the limits of power. But it was at that period that the great principles of the gospel which Protestantism had revived and re-proclaimed, having found in some instances a cordial embracement, began to develop the true missionary spirit. England, so long the bulwark of the religion of the Bible, and the centre of those enterprises which have so gloriously advanced, in all quarters of the globe, the empire of evangelical religion, first felt the impulse of this heaven-born principle. America, which, in the Puritans, became the home of some of her best population, soon began to exhibit the same blessed fruit. But it was rather by isolated individuals, and upon individual responsibility, that this important feature of Christianity was, for a long series of years, recognized and practically exhibited. The intractable elements of the body of the Church had not yet yielded to the sway of the simple truths of the gospel. The leaven of those soul-consecrating principles, which alone bear the fruit of a true missionary spirit, had not yet penetrated the Christian masses. And if Wesleyan Methodism be excepted—whose organization, in constitution and practical operation, is essentially missionary—it was not until the closing years of the eighteenth century in Great Britain, and the beginning of the nineteenth in America, that the missionary enterprise began to embody itself in organized effort, and the combined energies of masses to be enlisted in this great cause.

But the day of general awakening to these interests, at last, begins to dawn. The cycles of the gospel have been, it is true, slow in their revolutions. But the long season of preparation is fast passing away. And though enough has been accomplished already to exhibit the potency and success of the missionary enterprise, yet the prospects of the future may be measured no longer by the triumphs of the past.

The mind of the Christian masses has been aroused, and by positive intent brought immediately into contact with the high and pressing claims of missions. The principles of spiritual Christianity, which, by their own spontaneous, aggressive influence, are destined ever to evolve themselves in increasing range and power, are, at last, finding access to the hearts of the people. Henceforth, therefore, there is to be no retrogression; but the conditions upon which rest the realization and manifestation of missionary tendencies must become gradually more universal and complete, rendering every succeeding step, in the Church's onward march, but the opening and auxiliary to yet wider efforts and more glorious triumphs.

The obligations of Christians to be constant, earnest instruments in the propagation of the gospel by missionary enterprise, are universal and imperative; and it is the adaptation of the age to their right apprehension and fulfillment that constitutes a ground of belief of a speedy entrance upon a sphere of action commensurate with their high demands.

The gospel proposes its own gradual prevalence over all mankind; and it has provided that those who enjoy it, shall be the instruments to accomplish this end. There may be incidental methods which God in his kindness may employ as so many auxiliaries in the furtherance of his merciful purpose, but it is this law and mode of diffusion he has adopted and specifically constituted an integral part of his gracious economy. In all departments, he has chosen to accomplish his ends by the use of means, rather than by the spontaneous exertion of arbitrary power; and in this he has not departed from the same general plan. What though human philosophy may suggest methods by which God, in his infinitude, might realize his gracious purposes without human agency, and speculate upon the potency of instrumentalities which man

himself might substitute for his own immediate agency?—these can have no relevancy to the great interests involved. The economy of God is fixed: its demands are unalterable. The whole world must have the gospel; but it is to be conveyed to them by those by whom it has been embraced.

By specific appointment, therefore, the obligation to promote missionary operations is a cardinal feature of the Christian system, and is as imperious, consequently, as God's own authority.

But this obligation is heightened, if possible, still further, by the important relation it sustains to the economy of God and the success of his plans—to those cherished purposes, in reference to the triumphs of the Redeemer, in which the Godhead is so much interested, and to the fulfilment of which it is fully committed.

Nor is this responsibility of a nature to devolve upon Christians in the aggregate merely, and which individuals may shun without detriment to personal religion. It is blended essentially with the very substance of Christianity, and its assumption, in all advanced communities, is a condition both to the embracement and the maintenance of the religion of Christ. Indeed, so important, in the estimate of God, is the salvation of the whole world, that, dependent as it is upon human instrumentality to contribute to its promotion, it is, in some sort, the object for which men are converted. Individual importance is absorbed in the vastness of the results, to the achievement of which the gospel is committed; and in dispensing salvation to individuals, God has primarily in view an increase of instruments for the fulfillment of the great purpose of diffusion. Nor is it surprising, since the fate of the gospel is thus dependent, in an important sense, upon those who enjoy it, that God should make sure its final triumph, by giving to the obligation of diffusion

the greatest possible strength, even that of constituting it the essence and condition of piety.

But the magnitude of the consequences which depend upon the faithful execution of the duty with which Christians are thus charged, cannot fail to press upon every reflecting mind with all the weight and sacredness of a most solemn obligation.

Hundreds of millions of immortal souls, around us and in the distance, lie in utter ignorance of the truths and blessings of the gospel. Of those advantages to which we are indebted for all our enjoyments and hopes, and in exchange for which the universe could afford us no recompense, they know nothing. Not merely are they destitute of all that is saving, they are the slaves of forms of religion, themselves the most debasing, which not only sanction and encourage, but propagate vices and customs the most degrading and miserable. Without the knowledge or the means to secure the blessings of this world even, they are, in intellectual manifestation, but little removed from the beasts of the forest, and, in regard to all the elements of happiness, are more degraded and wretched than they.

This vast population, thus miserable, (for whom the gospel would do so much, both in time and eternity, who need only the gospel to elevate them to equality with the most favored classes, but who, without it, are doomed to remain thus degraded,) are dependent for the gospel, according to God's own appointment, upon the efforts of Christians. How awful the responsibility! Who can feel that he has met the common claims of humanity, unless he is employing his utmost capabilities for the rescue of those thus dependent and helpless? especially as these are his fellow-men, sprung from the same original stock, and as his condition might have been reversed; when his fate would, in like manner, have been

dependent upon others? Who would not be scouted as unworthy the name of a man, who would refuse, or be indifferent, to save a fellow-man from impending destruction? How strong, then, must be the obligation to use the effort to save, when, instead of one, millions are involved—when it is the only appointed means of safety, and when the salvation is not in respect merely of time, but of eternity itself! Indeed, when the vast and awful consequences which thus hang upon the will of Christians, are properly weighed, every feeling of benevolence, every dictate of reason and conscience, so stir and animate the whole man, that the propagation of the gospel, the salvation of men, must be the all-absorbing theme of the mind, and the great central business of the life.

Such being the relation which Christians sustain to the destitute world, how can he, who has been indifferent to the spread of the gospel, and has failed to exercise, in the promotion of that end, his utmost capabilities, feel, when he shall meet at the great judgment, the millions who shall have died in ignorance of Christ? How can he bear their reproaches? How can he feel uncondemned, when he is conscious that many have perished through his supineness? How can he meet his God, having manifested so little loyalty to his cause, so little concern for the triumph of his Redeemer? These millions, thus destitute, are beings for whom Christ died, and for whom he is ever concerned. His relation, therefore, to Christ, as his leader, his professed love for him, allow of nothing short of his constant and most earnest efforts for the salvation of mankind. The honor and glory of Christ's kingdom are dependent upon its progress and triumphs. The Christian, therefore, is unfaithful to his Saviour, unless he is constantly making, earnestly and to the utmost, every effort that will contribute to that end.

To do good—to be in the highest sense instrumental in

the salvation of men—is the legitimate impulse, the proper fruit of a true personal Christianity.

There may be in men a degree of selfishness in regard to most of the blessings of life—an aversion, more or less strong, to their diffusion—lest their own chances for self-gratification may be diminished, or their importance reduced. But in the Christian religion no such exclusive, degraded spirit exists. The fountain of supply is felt to be inexhaustible. No one feels that an extension of its blessings diminishes his enjoyment, or injures, in any wise, his position or prospects. Indeed, in the instance of Christianity, self-love, contrary to its usual action, delights in the diffusion of every blessing, and is the most gratified according as others are most elevated and happy. Such is its nature, that it is most fed and indulged in the processes of the extension of Christianity. Revival, missionary success, onward progress in the empire of Christendom, is the element in which it best lives, and in which it has most conscious enjoyment. As religion flourishes, as the powers of darkness recede, and people give in their adhesion to Christ, so Christians experience a conscious security, elevation, and hope. Hence their own happiness and prospects, in important particulars, are always in direct correspondence with the extent of missionary operations. The principle of self-love, therefore, as it exists in Christian experience, naturally leads to missionary effort.

Gratitude to God is a profound, ever active emotion of the Christian's heart. Under its influence, the constant impulse is to do all in his power to requite the goodness of his benefactor. The furtherance of the cause of God around him, and among distant people, is the field that naturally presents itself for the gratification of this holy feeling. Hence, to devote himself, personally, when practicable—and, at all times, his means and influence—to the propagation of the gospel, is his loved and genial employment.

Love for his Saviour, and a consequent alliance with his fortunes, plans, and purposes, is another essential characteristic of the Christian. Hence, the salvation of mankind, being the object of the Saviour's advent, of his intense desire now, and upon which his honor and glory are staked, the Christian is constrained, by every affection of his nature, to devote himself to this object, and, as the natural prompting of his heart, labors for the spread of the gospel.

The moral nature which the gospel contemplates, implies such intense abhorrence of the powers of darkness, and such fervid approbation of all that is pure and holy, that indifference or passivity in regard to those movements which give impulse and progress to the interests of religion is utterly unnatural, and the soul suffers violence, unless ardently engaged in doing the utmost possible good.

Recognizing himself as but a sojourner in this scene of existence, and alive only to the invisible glories and attractions of heaven, the Christian supremely desires to lay up treasure there. Thus feeling, what manner of life, what field of action, suits him so well as the extension of the interests of his Divine Master? In this employment only he is conscious of doing something in pursuance of his controlling aspirations. His joy, faith, and hope hold him in perpetual contact with the interests of heaven, and the sphere of usefulness is his only genial element.

But if the elements of Christian experience, taken separately, would each develop a missionary spirit, much more effectually does this result follow from the actual combination of all these elements. Whenever, therefore, Christianity is not trammelled or enfeebled in its influence by the want of right knowledge—whenever it is allowed, in the symmetry, harmony, and strength of its own principles, to develop itself in the life—missionary enterprise, in all its energy and universality, is its legitimate and necessary fruit. But, if so, then

it must constitute an essential part of Christianity, and consequently be of binding obligation upon every Christian.

But the obligation of every Christian to contribute, with all his ability, to the diffusion of the Gospel throughout the world, is still further seen in the fact that God has made it his privilege to render effective aid toward the accomplishment of that end.

The gospel, the naked, unaided gospel, is the immediate instrument by which the salvation of men is secured. Accompanied as it is by an indwelling divine energy, it, if it only have access to men of sufficient mental elevation to understand it, will make advances, and every step of its progress will be the means of yet more rapid strides, and more glorious successes. But this gospel, thus so well adapted when brought into contact with men to secure its saving results, it is practicable to carry everywhere, into all lands, and among all people. With the men who might be employed as its immediate bearers, and the facilities that might be afforded for their support if all Christians properly appreciated their responsibilities, the entire world might soon receive its light. With this engine of salvation, under its law of a rapidly progressive increase of aggressive force with every step of its advancement, if all Christians were to exert their utmost strength in giving efficacy and extension to missionary operations, the work of the world's redemption would not only triumphantly move onward, but soon find its consummation in the splendors of the millennial day.

But there are collateral agencies which Christians might employ, both to prepare the way for the more complete success of the gospel and to sustain and give efficiency to the redeeming influences which it establishes. Organizations for partial reformation and elevation — establishments for the dissemination of ameliorating influences, and for the protection of the poor and wretched — a thoughtful, judicious em-

ployment of the agencies of commerce, of colonization, of international relationships and capabilities—all might be brought under requisition and made subservient to the spread of the gospel of Christ.

The glorious results which have already followed missionary efforts, in various portions of the earth, are themselves conclusive evidence of the capabilities of Christians for successful effort in the spread of the gospel.

The rapid success of Methodism in extending itself, in an organized form, through well-nigh the whole territorial extent of Great Britain, the Canadas, and the United States, has been the fruit mainly of missionary enterprise. The earliest movements of Methodism, in each of these countries, were purely missionary; and assuming an organization with direct reference to missionary operation, by a constant and judicious employment of men and means, in new and unappropriated fields, incorporating each into the regular system, and making it in turn tributary to the work of aggression, according as it became capable of self-support, it has gradually widened the limits of its jurisdiction, and increased the number of followers, until now, chiefly through this great agency, it has become the most powerful and extensive of all the Protestant denominations. Indeed, unpatronized by the great, and opposed by all the world, with the humble instrumentalities she at first employed, it can hardly be believed that, without the missionary feature of her organization, she would have had a name in the records of history. It was to illustrate the efficiency of the missionary principle, and to secure a system of judicious effort to convey the gospel to the world, that constituted, doubtless, a principal design of Providence in bringing her into existence.

Belgium, a few years ago, had not in all her realm a single Protestant minister. Now she numbers more than a thousand, while the membership of the various Protestant Churches

consists of many thousands — all of which has been the result of missionary effort.

France and Italy and Germany and Sweden — and, indeed, most of the kingdoms of Europe — are witnesses to the success which awaits properly directed missionary exertion. In despite of all the prejudices of superstition, and the counter-machinations of a powerful priesthood, the leaven of evangelical religion, which by missionary zeal has been silently and unobtrusively infused into different parts of those countries, is gradually penetrating the masses, and originating influences that are destined to work out the most glorious results. Indeed, some of those results have already begun to exhibit themselves, especially in Italy and France, where the signs are not wanting of ameliorations and changes the most inspiring to the Christian.

In Asia, Africa, and South America, under the most unfavorable circumstances, something has been effected towards the evangelization of the heathen — furnishing incontestable proof that it is God's purpose to give efficiency and success to missionary labors.

In some of the Islands, many most glorious achievements of missionary enterprise have been accomplished. The Sandwich Islands, embracing a population of more than a hundred thousand, since 1820, when the first mission was established, have been transformed into a Christian nation, abounding in the arts of civilized life, and adhering to the forms of evangelical Christianity. Many other groups have likewise been the scene of missionary triumphs, demonstrating the potency and success, in the spread of Christianity, of the missionary principle.

But if Christians, each and all, may be instrumental in spreading the light of Christianity over the world: if they have but to put forth their effort, when men everywhere will be savingly redeemed: if the experience of the past demon-

strates the practicability of highest success in the great work of the universal diffusion of Christianity by human instrumentality—is it not demonstrable that the duty to devote themselves, at all times, and at every practicable place, to the spread of the gospel, is clear and imperative? To refuse to do so would argue the absence of every noble, generous impulse—it would be cruelty; and, worse still, it would be the renunciation of all allegiance to God's name and authority. There can be, therefore, no escape from the responsibility. The obligations of missionary effort necessarily connect themselves with all Christian profession and enjoyment; and their recognition and redemption among those of proper religious advantages, can be disregarded at no less a price than the forfeiture of religion itself.

A compliance with missionary obligation is attended, in addition to those blessings which result from obedience to God, with many inestimable advantages, confirming that great principle of God's economy of the indissoluble union between duty and interest.

In any sphere of life, right missionary effort involves the exercise of all the graces. Whatever constitutes the subjective character of Christianity—faith, courage, love, hope, humility, patience, charity—these great elements of Christian experience all are kept in highest tension in the faithful discharge of missionary obligation. Indeed, missionary employment is but Christianity itself, in the full exercise of its own peculiar principles. The great field of missions, therefore, is the Christian's destined sphere for the maturity of all those qualities which make up the amplitude and symmetry of Christian character. In his own private sphere he may be restricted and confined, but the partial, unequal character, which he might accordingly assume, is rectified and perfected in this broader field of action.

Indeed, so related are all the graces of the Christian to

those exercises involved in doing good, in disseminating Christianity, that it may be well doubted whether they ever exist in a healthy, perfect condition, independently of them. Constituted as they are with reference to these objects, and destined to move in this field, away from it, deprived of their natural and appointed sustenance, they must wither and perish. Christianity, without missionary zeal, has ever exhibited itself an inert, lifeless system, distinguishable only by its forms, or else as a partial system, a splendid enormity, which owes all its value to the sacrifice of some essential qualities. Pervaded and actualized on the other hand by an enlightened missionary spirit, it has ever shown itself vigorous and full of vitality, everywhere developing its qualities harmoniously and scripturally, and going forth with energy and success to the accomplishment of its appointed ends.

There is, in right missionary zeal, an all-embracing sympathy—a deep, ever-active interest in the welfare of all others—that tends to keep the mind inquisitive in regard to all the world. Alive, thus, to the religious history of all, and availing itself of every accessible source of information, the Christian mind at all times maintains an intelligent apprehension of the religious state of the world. A missionary Church necessarily is an enlightened Church. With an element of mental activity stimulating to mental inquiry over the broad field of both actual and possible missionary enterprise, it enjoys an intimate and extended knowledge of all mankind. But this knowledge, while it forestalls the blighting influence of selfish seclusiveness and indifference, which too often has been the bane of the Church, is itself an essential element of Christian excellence, and the basis of all distinguished Christian enterprise and progress.

It is the spirit of missions that imparts liveliness to the piety of the Church, energy to her operations, and progressiveness to her onward march. And the difference in public

spirit, extended sympathy, and, consequently, in a general acquaintance with the religious history of the world—indeed, in all that adorns and gives impulse and progress to the higher forms of Christianity—between a Church without proper missionary spirit and one which enjoys it, demonstrates conclusively the powerful influence of this spirit in the promotion of these important graces.

In the cause of missions, all the resources of the Christian may find employment. Wealth, talents, position, personal exertion, however great or however small, each and all, may be usefully appropriated in this great field. All may be useful and all may employ all they have in the cause of God. However much, therefore, Christians may be restricted in all other departments in this great field, ample room is afforded for the practical manifestation of the highest zeal, and every evidence of devotion to God.

In every aspect in which it may be considered, the missionary field sustains a most important relation to the development and perfection of all those qualities which give symmetry and elevation to Christian character, and which secure the fullest preparation for heaven. Indeed, so necessary is it, that without it the Christian is without any fixed law of growth, and is incapable of maturity or perfection. It is the great theatre which God has appointed for his right education and training, and needs only to be rightly occupied to secure to every one, in the end, the most triumphant results.

Successful missionary effort secures indirectly other important advantages.

Every man is benefited, in a variety of ways, by the diffusion of Christianity throughout the country in which he lives. Every individual gained to the cause of Christ constitutes an addition to the stock of general happiness, and thus, in a progressive ratio, until the whole body politic is leavened with the gospel.

All free government like ours is but the expression of the sentiments of the people, and, consequently, in its administration will be pure, and directed to Christian objects, according to the number of those in it who are the subjects of Christian principle. All governments, even such as are limited like ours, embrace a wide sphere to which moral quality attaches, and in which they may be used for the furtherance of Christian ends. The motives and the conduct of those who are the officers of government, the capabilities of the government for the suppression of crime, for the protection of virtue, for guarding the sanctity of the Sabbath, and the sacred institutions liable to be invaded by sacrilegious violence, and for the promotion, by positive legislation, of those enterprises which look to the moral elevation and happiness of community—all these involve moral quality and evince the potency of government in the promotion of evil or of good. But if government, in all these respects, may be for or against the cause of God, according to the relative proportion of its Christian subjects, then most evidently, all interested as they are in these moral relations of government are benefited by every accession to the cause of Christ, and most of all, by the evangelization of the whole country. No one who, acquainted with the history of the government, is aware of the evils resulting from corrupt men in power, from corrupt legislation, and from a failure to exercise the legitimate functions of civil authority in the promotion of virtue, can avoid the same conclusion. Much is said of parties, of measures, and of men, as panaceas of our political evils, and as the only requisite instrumentality of every desired blessing to the country. But after all, Christianity is the grand element needed, and this diffused, would give stability to our institutions, honesty in the enactment and administration of law, and all the moral elevation and happiness which it is the high prerogative of government to secure. As long

therefore, as there are those within a government who do not practically recognize their allegiance to Heaven, every advancement which Christianity makes among them, whether within the limits of the organized Church, or among those supplied with the gospel by agencies more peculiarly missionary, must be advantageous to the entire country.

The social character of men renders them exceedingly liable to the sway of social influences, and especially, in virtue of their innate depravity, of those antagonistic to Christian faith and practice. All men, even in the maturity of their manly strength and firmness, are affected by these moral influences; and the youth of the country take the form of their character almost exclusively from them. But the elements which constitute these influences — such as public opinion, current maxims, fashion, and example — are adverse or favorable to virtue and to piety, according to the extent of the prevalence of Christian principle. These are but the aggregate of all the individual manifestations in these respects, and hence their moral effect will be proportionate to the progress of Christianity among the whole population. Nor can any fractional part of a community, however isolated or compact, be independent of these influences elsewhere exhibited. There is between all sections of any civilized country, and especially of one like ours, such a mutual, social connection and dependence, as make the various elements of social influence existing in one spot felt everywhere, and the character of this influence, generally prevailing, but the combined result of the social character of every section of the country. The dependence of every individual, and especially the young, thus felt upon the moral progress of community, is witnessed by every man's experience, and especially in those communities whose moral progress being very limited or very general, exhibits the effect of this principle in a striking degree. Any advancement, therefore, which Chris-

tianity makes in any part of the country, is a blessing to every man of that country, and increasingly so with every step, until the whole population is leavened with the truth.

But there are other general changes, which the progress of Christianity in any community secures, that are highly advantageous to the whole country. There are various calamities which may befall communities, such as pecuniary revulsions, social agitations, famine, pestilence, and providential visitations without number. In every country these have occurred, and our own, as highly favored as it is in all the constituents of prosperity, is not exempt from them. That they are, at least in great part, the judgments of God, the righteous inflictions of Divine Providence upon the sins of the people, is of easy apprehension to those who rightly appreciate the Divine economy; and it is confirmed by the facts, that most of these calamities are, indeed, directly traceable to transgressions of moral law, and that they generally occur in those communities in which the greatest number and most distinguished instances of moral dereliction are found. But in every community, by a law of Heaven, (such is the mutual connection subsisting between its various parts,) in respect of all temporal judgments, the responsibility of sin is in an important sense shared by all, so that these calamities, though occasioned by but a part, yet are felt in their destructive influences by the whole community. However high, therefore, may be any man's Christian experience, or favorable soever that of his immediate neighborhood, he is, nevertheless, so dependent upon the moral state of the whole country, that his own interests are promoted by the advancement of Christianity in any part of that country.

But this connection existing between every man and the whole country in which he resides (in consequence of which he is affected in these various methods by the moral progress of every part of that country) likewise exists, though, per-

haps, in various inferior degrees, between him and all portions of the habitable globe, so that, in all these particulars, every man is benefited by the spread of Christianity in every part of the earth.

History proves that, correspondingly with the diffusion and influence of Christianity among nations, will be the development of all those resources, both intellectual and material, which make their international relationships valuable—that the spread of Christianity among a people hitherto dead to the world, leading them to industry, to enterprise, and general cultivation, will ultimately bring them into relative significance and usefulness; and that the benevolent, conciliatory influences of missionary operations contribute more than all else to bind one country to another, and to give access to those advantages which its peculiar resources and circumstances afford. Missionary effort, therefore, multiplies and enlarges the benefits which result from commerce with the nations of the earth.

Missionary effort, in virtue of the faith and motives which prompt to it, the increase of Christian strength, and the extension of Christian territory which its success secures, and the increased availability of Christ's mediation which this greater activity involves, propitiates the kindness of Heaven and insures a divine blessing, felt everywhere in the impartation of renewed life to the Christian, greater success to his efforts, and a more universal happiness.

From this broad survey, the evidence is accumulative and conclusive, that the interest of every man, both temporal and spiritual, earthly and heavenly, is bound up with the exercise and success of missionary exertion, at home and abroad, and that duty in this respect, as in all others, is inseparably blended with benefit.

Though the achievements of missionary enterprise have been sufficient to excite our gratitude, and to evince in clear-

est light its obligations, yet to all who understand the potency of the gospel, as an aggressive agency, and the divine sanction of all legitimate means to advance it, the comparative inefficiency of missionary operations, both past and present, must be apparent.

This fact, so lamentable and so pressing in its claims upon our attention, is attributable to several causes.

1. Missionary operations thus far have been a simple appendage—a mere incidental arrangement, as respects the whole Church, rather than the last, highest expression of all her principles in full proportion and activity. They are the result of a spirit in the Church, struggling, but not yet with full power to reach the elevation adapted to missionary enterprise—of a combination of the highest forms of Christianity existing, not generally, but here and there in isolated instances, and uniting by sympathetic affinity over masses not yet prepared for the expression of this the fullest growth and perfection of Christian principle. The entire strength of all the resources of all the Church has never yet been exerted in this field of Christian action. This field has never yet stood out before the entire Church, as the cherished object of its constant attention—the great theatre on which all its qualities and capabilities, pent up and restrained without it, are to find their desired exercise and expansion. This scheme is but a single element, a mere isolated part of the system of the Church—regarded as demanding but an occasional thought from the mass of the Church, and to be left to the care of those alone to whom its management is more immediately committed. The active mind of the entire Church—its powerful, constant faith—its fervid zeal—its earnest, ever-recurring prayer—its extensive pecuniary resources—have never yet been furnished as a systematic, spontaneous contribution to the grand cause of missions. The limited number of those more immediately devoted to this cause—

the powerful external machinery appointed to arouse an occasional spasmodic enthusiasm in its behalf—the meagre amount of pecuniary contribution to it—the rareness with which it becomes an engrossing topic of thought, or of converse, or of prayer, public or private—in short, the slightness of its hold upon the attention, the moral sense, and the deep, all-pervading sympathies of the people, are all evidences of the incidental character of this cause, and of the fact that missionary enterprise has never yet become the exponent of the mature strength of Christian principle.

But missionary operations can never be commensurate in extent with the obligations of the Church, or in themselves possess the necessary elements of full success, unless they practically sustain to the Church this high relation. Being, in the order of Heaven's economy, but the fruit of a piety overflowing and seeking this its destined outlet, they only, when thus constituted, combine those elements of moral force requisite to complete prosperity. Then only is enterprise broad, comprehensive, and sustained: then only is moral power vitalizing and resistless; and then only are all of the great forces of the Church militant properly arrayed for these her highest achievements. Until, therefore, missionary enterprise becomes the expression of the zeal of the whole Church, the outlet of her moral forces seeking this the appointed method of their development, the cherished offspring of the vast hosts of the cross, the object of unremitting attention, of unfaltering energy, and of widest, most enduring faith, the field of its exercise will be narrow, and, with the conditions of successful cultivation unfulfilled, necessarily to a great extent unproductive.

But this want of adaptation in the existing condition of the Church to missionary enterprise is fatal to its success, not merely because of the absence it implies of those qualities which make up the conditions of right missionary effort, but

because of the lack of that fullness of divine aid, without which no Christian movement is successful, and to the impatiation of which, neglect or short-coming is an effectual barrier.

2. Missionary enterprise has been greatly defeated by an unwise selection of some of the principal fields of its operation. The heathen and those of them most degraded, as being most helpless, have enjoyed the largest share of attention, while the more enlightened, though equally destitute, have been comparatively neglected. The darkest portions of Asia, of Africa, and America, have been the spots on which missionary labor has been, for the most part, expended, while the destitute portions of Europe, and many of the more civilized sections in America, except in a few isolated instances, have received but little attention.

But, if the salvation of the greatest number, and the most rapid advancement to the great end of universal evangelization, should be the controlling consideration in the scheme of missionary operations, the impolicy of this preference is apparent.

The languages of the degraded heathen, generally so remote from those of Christian nations, and consequently so difficult of acquisition, are so imperfect and incapable of conveying the high conceptions which pertain to spiritual Christianity, as necessarily to interpose an insuperable barrier to its diffusion among them. The same obstacles do not in general exist among the people of Europe and America, who, though equally destitute of the true religion, yet speak languages cognate with those of evangelical countries, and capable of conveying the great truths of the Christian religion. If, therefore, the missionary zeal of the Church were directed more exclusively to people further advanced in civilization, much of the labor, time, and means now expended in preparation would be avoided, and every resource would be at once available in the evangelization of men.

A people in the lowest state of degradation are incapable of maintaining, if not of embracing, the pure doctrines of Christianity. The conceptions of Christianity, partaking of the abstract and spiritual, without some degree of mental elevation, cannot be embraced, or find a permanent lodgment in the mind. Experience demonstrates the difficulty of bringing the lowest forms of mind, in civilized countries even, into an appreciation of the doctrines of the Bible, and of securing among them a stable Christianity. How much greater must this difficulty be among a people yet lower in the scale of being—susceptible only of the grossest ideas, and surrounded by influences which constantly tend still further to degrade them!

The success which has attended partial efforts in portions of destitute Europe and America, when contrasted with what has been achieved in Asia and Africa, in which the missionary energies of the Church have been mainly expended, conclusively shows the advantage of selecting the more intellectually advanced as the important field for missionary exertion. With some degree of mental elevation, yet, as respects all that is vital, equally degraded and destitute, and with languages already known to many who may be employed as missionaries, the gospel, when presented to them, finds immediate access, and when embraced, retains and perpetuates its influence, constituting every additional subject an additional accession to the force already employed.

There is, perhaps, not a spot among the heathen that could be selected as the scene of operations, which is not necessarily severed from all Christian society, and surrounded by those alone in similar moral condition. How difficult must it be to make a people pure, and, still further, to perpetuate purity, when every existing influence concurs to oppose it. But if missionary zeal were chiefly directed to those on the confines of evangelical Christendom, or to those anywhere of

partial civilization, these obstacles of remoteness from the good, and of contiguity to moral darkness and degradation, would be removed, leaving the gospel in a more favorable condition to work out its own glorious results.

The Church herself would acquire increased efficiency, by pursuing this mode of diffusion. There exists among all nations, of any degree of civilization, a mutual moral influence, an influence strong in the ratio of the degree of that civilization and of their proximity. It is impossible, therefore, that the moral strength of any people should be fully developed as long as there is the absence of Christianity among those enjoying this connection with them. The effect, therefore, of giving those communities the farthest advanced in civilization, who are yet destitute of the Bible, the preference in the selection of missionary fields—of making the degree of the intellectual advancement the test of the amount of missionary effort to be concentrated upon them—will be to give Christendom great advantages, not merely in a negative sense, by the removal of obstructions, but, positively, in the expansion of its fervor and enterprise.

The very compactness of Christian influence which this system would secure, free from spots of intermediate darkness, and unmingled with intractable materials, would impart to the Christian force of the world an energy and breadth of range which, under the present diluted condition of Christendom, cannot be enjoyed.

This system, so far from involving the neglect of the heathen, will secure their conversion to Christianity, much sooner than the one now pursued. Many heathen nations may not be the objects of missionary efforts so soon, but it will secure the conversion of a greater number of heathen within a given time, and consequently a more speedy evangelization of the whole world. It is, perhaps, right that the sympathies of the Christian world should make it no respecter of nations, and

averse to the postponement of the claims of any upon its benevolence; (and it has been by this feeling alone that its policy hitherto has been dictated;) but as all cannot receive the gospel at once, and the process of its diffusion must be gradual, it is wise, and in harmony with God's own providence, that, irrespective of all other considerations, that course should be pursued which promises the most rapid success in the universal extension of the Redeemer's kingdom.

There is no nation in Europe which is not partially civilized, and, therefore, in a condition to receive the gospel. Suppose all its population were the subjects of saving Christianity, and consequently realized that missionary zeal which properly enlightened views ever inspire, what amount of Christian influence would be exerted upon all that vast population which surrounds it, and which is now in heathenish darkness! Suppose Spain and Italy, and Greece and Turkey and Russia, were all thoroughly Christian nations, what would be the advantages enjoyed, in respect of a conversion to Christianity, by Northern Africa, Egypt, Asia Minor, Syria, Asiatic Russia, and Tartary, all of which are contiguous to these nations. Contiguity, easiness of access, advantages in respect of language, international bonds and relationships, all would give numberless facilities for success in the spread of the gospel, which under no other circumstances would be enjoyed. The pure light, thus shining brilliantly from the teeming millions of Europe, could not be hemmed in by continental limits, but would gradually spread itself over the vast hordes of neighboring Asia and Africa, until all had felt the saving influence of its benignant beams. These European nations, thus evangelized, would rapidly advance, through the elevating tendencies of Christianity, in all the elements of a high civilization. By commerce, therefore, by colonization, by all those processes of amalgamation which constantly go on between neighboring nations, these adjacent portions of Asia and Africa would

enjoy a constant accession of those influences which elevate the mind and improve the condition of a people; so that while the Christianity of Europe would furnish all the instrumentalities requisite for its own diffusion, her international associations would be perpetually carrying on such civilizing processes as would be necessary to prepare the way for its reception. In the present condition of Christendom, the efforts of missionary enterprise are futile, compared with the grandeur and efficiency of those agencies which would then be employed for the conversion of this immense population. But upon the conversion of this contiguous population, they themselves would become a part of the great missionary force and a centre of operations to extend the limits of Christendom still farther among their neighbors, in the heart of Asia and Africa, and thus onward, in this aggressive method, until those vast continents shall be covered with the civilization and glory of the cross.

The United States, especially, through their Pacific territories, sustain the most intimate relation to Mexico, to the Western States of South America, to the islands of the Pacific, to China, and other Asiatic countries, all of which are occupied by a heathen or a not much less degraded people. If by suitable direction of missionary effort, all their population were made pious, so that all of the channels of connection which arise out of this relation were sanctified and religiously controlled, they would contribute more to the civilization and evangelization of these dark portions of the earth, than the present random, immethodical plans can possibly accomplish.

It is perhaps proper—it is perhaps wise—that China should be, as she is, a chosen field for missionary enterprise. Her people, though locked up in a language that almost defies acquisition, are yet partially civilized, and capable now, in some measure, of receiving the ideas peculiar to the gospel; and the intimate commercial relations established between

her and the evangelical countries of Europe and America will be powerful auxiliaries to the specific agencies of the gospel. These facts take her out of the relation which the vast mass of the heathen sustain to the Christian world, and place her, perhaps, in the category of those, the proper objects of immediate missionary effort. But after all, we doubt not that time will show that China is to receive the most efficient of the agencies for her evangelization through her relations to the Pacific territories of the United States, showing still the correctness of the view advanced, that the instrumentalities which do in fact the work of evangelizing a heathen people, are such only as press upon them, and are brought to bear through the nearness and directness of their relations with those already subjected to the dominion of the gospel.

Christianity is essential to any desirable or perfect state of civilization, but some degree of civilization is an indispensable basis to any successful implantation of the gospel. Commerce, colonization, amalgamation, are the great instrumentalities which the gospel seizes upon to communicate itself to destitute communities. And the great business of the Church is to watch the direction of these, and to regulate accordingly her missionary enterprise. These, in fact, are the providential indications to the proper fields of missionary activity—the true channels in which should run the zeal and efforts of the Church. These, too, however prosperous and rapid the real march of missions, will ever keep in advance, furnishing perpetually proper openings for effort, since, in the nature of things, before the missionary field in any country can be exhausted, it must reach a stage of progress at which these relations to destitute surrounding countries will be established. So that, while the gospel is dependent upon these harbingers for its propagation, it is yet within its own province so to keep them in advance, that its success is after all in the ratio of the energy and efficiency with which it is applied. These

great forerunners of the gospel do not constitute a part of the gospel, nor do they imply its inadequacy to accomplish that whereunto it is sent: they simply indicate the necessity of some degree of preparation, before the gospel can have such access as is necessary to its general saving embracement. This has ever been the history of the extension of Christianity—its history in Europe and America, and more recently, its history in respect of our Pacific territories; for it has been by colonization that the gospel has been carried over this continent to the Pacific, and it will perhaps be, under the blessing of God, by colonization that it will be conveyed to the destitute islands of the Pacific, to China, to Japan, and the other regions of Asia—the present degraded races, by a law of contact between a higher and lower race, being supplanted, and those vast regions becoming the domain of the Christian descendants of the Anglo-Saxon race. It may be that the world is thus to be converted by higher Christian races taking the places of its present degraded inhabitants, so that when the millennial day shall appear, it shall exhibit a world, not only evangelized, but whose inhabitants shall be so elevated in the scale of being, that its Christianity shall be the realization of the full measure of the amplitude and grandeur of the gospel of Christ.

3. The want of the requisite strength, at the various points at which missionary effort has been made, has contributed to limit the success of missions. The history of missionary operations, especially of those in foreign lands, shows the injurious effect upon their efficiency of a weakness of force—a weakness mainly consequent upon a multiplication of the fields of labor. What are the efforts of a few men among many millions of degraded, wretched people, especially when, as in almost all our foreign missions, there are frequent intervals of entire absence of all missionary effort? There is no correspondence between the means employed and the ob-

ject to be accomplished. An increase of strength at the various points occupied, or even a more perfect concentration of the strength already employed, even though it would limit the number of points occupied, would secure, in a given time, a greater aggregate of accessions and a more rapid extension of the Redeemer's kingdom. The Napoleon tactics, which aim at a concentration of forces, are not more important in war than in missionary operations; and a degree of success commensurate with the obligations of the Church will never be secured, until this principle is practically adopted. And in many of those fields, where the defects of this inadequate system of supply might be partially met by the proper training and employment of native assistants, no judicious and well-digested plan for accomplishing this end has yet been devised.

4. The concentration of the efforts of missionaries upon the adult classes, instead of a system of effort which looks to the ultimate evangelization of the people by the proper religious education and training of the young, has been another cause of the comparative failure of missions. Among a people so low as are the heathen, and as are even a large portion of our negroes, the adult classes are unsusceptible, in any permanent degree, of the transforming influences of the gospel; and if missionary effort is restricted to them, it must be a long time before they can assume the position of an evangelical people, if indeed they ever can. Their intellects are too contracted, and their existing ideas are too gross, to receive any thing like, generally in any permanently impressible degree, the ideas of the gospel; and even if they could, the baser passions, by nature, have such ascendancy, and are so much confirmed by cultivation and habit, as to overbear any degree of the feeble light which they are capable of receiving. Among them, there is too much ignorance to be overcome—too much error to be eliminated—too much of

natural opposition to be overcome—for the slight amount of truth which they are capable of receiving, to subject them to Christian dominion, and to mould them into the pure forms of a holy, life-giving Christianity. Restricted then as missionary effort has been mainly to them, it is not to be expected that much could be accomplished; and it is no reflection upon the capacity of missionary enterprise, that visible success has thus far been comparatively limited. But, directed to the young, whose minds are not preoccupied with the grossness of their fathers, and whose propensities have not been strengthened by indulgence and habit, missionary effort can be successful in the impartation of religious ideas, which, being received at that impressible season, will mould the character and habits in accordance with them, so that when this generation grow up and take the places of those who preceded them, that people will exhibit a race imbued with the truths of the gospel, and with habits and principles evolved by their influence. A higher place they will occupy in the scale of moral and intellectual being—a race they will become more susceptible of the appliances of the gospel—indeed, a race themselves prepared to cooperate with missionary agencies, and affording advantages for an elevation of their children beyond the point they have attained—securing thus the constant movement of a system of influences destined to perpetuate an upward progress, in every successive generation, until truth and righteousness shall universally prevail. If even in Christian lands, it has been found to be the most successful plan for the spread of Christianity to operate among the young—even though the unconverted adult classes have grown up with characters largely modelled by the principles of Christianity, and with ideas already received, sufficient to form a basis for the action of gospel appliances—surely such a course is the most judicious among a people whose adult classes, both in the opposition of their gross untractable na-

ture, and the utter destitution of their minds, present every barrier to the impress of gospel instrumentalities. Missionary effort, therefore, ought to be directed mainly to the religious education of the young. Until this is the adopted policy, all will be uncertainty, instability, and comparative defeat; but when made such, though for a time progress may seem slow, and there may be but little to report of direct success, yet when the young, thus educated, begin to assume their places upon the stage of action, and wield the influence which their advantages, moral and intellectual, will have secured to them, a change will mark the condition of society, and the moral agencies which control it will be visible to all, full of blessing to the people, and glorious in the estimation of the friends of missions.

Moreover, as under this system the peculiar work required is not such as to demand ministerial labor exclusively, but laymen and women may be made serviceable in its prosecution, it opens up a scheme of missionary enterprise by which it is practicable to add, with the same convenience, a greatly additional force to that possible to be employed under the present system, of almost exclusive attention to the adult classes—by which it is practicable to enlist many of the good, not belonging to the ministry, but who, burning to do good, would gladly be employed in the glorious work of spreading the light of the gospel among the destitute of the earth. Thus might the missionary force be made indefinitely strong, without those drains from the ranks of the ministry which, under the present system, would be demanded; and a field being opened up, in which missionary zeal and sympathy, in all ranks, might expend itself, greatly increased life and activity would be everywhere imparted to the missionary cause.

5. Impatience—too great haste to realize results—has been an unvarying characteristic of missionary operations.

So accustomed is the age to a system of pressure for compassing the fruits of enterprise—to the most rapid realization of schemes—to a constant succession of the most surprising changes, carrying forward individuals and communities with exciting, bewildering speed—that it is disqualified for any scheme that does not promise immediate reward. In all its operations, it is actuated by this same spirit. But the conversion of the world is a scheme of vast extent, and must require an indefinite time for its fulfillment. Merely random effort in aid of it—a mere temporary policy, adopted with no wise and suitable reference to the future—are unworthy of the great interests involved, and inadequate to the high and pressing obligations of the Church. With a comprehensive foresight of the nature and extent of the object to be accomplished, the mode of its accomplishment should be reduced, if possible, to one vast system, in which the proper kinds of instrumentality should be determined, the proper places of the various parties assigned, the effort employed be made to refer by mutual understanding to given objects and reciprocally to conduce to the achievement of the same great results. This system might demand, with the return of each moral cycle, a new adjustment, but, with the increased light and resources enjoyed, it would be rendered more perfect, and consequently more efficient, in the realization of its appointed ends. If, under this arrangement, our generation, and others yet to come, should be required to perform work merely preliminary and preparatory, in which but little practical fruit would be seen, in the spirit of faith and with an enlightened apprehension of the future bearing of our labors, we should seek more fully to meet this requirement, feeling that this is a work equally valuable and perhaps more pleasing to God, as being sustained less by the prospect of immediate results, than by faith in the pledges of a superintending Providence. But this elevated view of the relation of the Church to mis-

sions, seems never yet to have been generally realized. In harmony with the spirit of the age, immediate fruit, visible, practical results, a sacrifice of all considerations of the future to the interests of the present, constitute the only object of concern, the great rule of practice. Hence the immediate rush, without the requisite preparatory steps, into the very heart of heathenism, and the random character of the efforts employed. Hence the division of strength, by scattering it in a variety of fields—the result of an impatient, illy considered desire to convert all the world at once. Hence the restriction of effort in a great degree to the adult population, being indisposed to wait for the slow, yet in the end, much greater effects which would follow an expenditure of effort mainly upon the young. Hence the absence of system, comprehensive and far-reaching, to which enterprise is subjected; and hence, indeed, the meagre amount of missionary zeal, so far short of the obligations of the Church and the demands of the world.

The great desideratum now, in respect of the missionary cause, is, that the masses should be brought into a profounder and more abiding relation to the interests of missions. Suitable zeal would then naturally follow, and the general mind, intently occupied as it would be, in this behalf, would gradually rectify itself, as to the proper method of management, until correct views would prevail. This demand is to be met by the diffusion of knowledge, touching the whole sphere of missionary relationship. Engrossed in the work of personal salvation, and the interests of religion at home, the general mind hitherto has remained in ignorance on these great subjects. But the conscience of the Church is, in the main, right, and only needs light, when this direct and universal relationship to the cause of missions would be at once recognized. The press, hitherto used but partially and indirectly in subserviency of this enterprise, must be employed specially

to send out, in every form likely to find general circulation and reach the public mind, a constant stream of information, gathered from the Bible, from reasoning, from history, from the present condition of the various missionary fields, and any other source likely to enlighten the judgment, and stir the conscience. Those who rightly think and feel upon this subject—the ministry and more advanced of the laity—should bestir themselves to give these sources of knowledge currency and acceptability among the people. Through the pulpit and the more private medium of converse, the public mind should be constantly held in contact with missionary interests. The present is a reading age, and an age of oratory and eloquence, and at no former period could these powerful agencies be more availably employed in aid of the great cause of missions.

But however potent may be these agencies, the Church can never be brought into this intimate and universal conscious relationship to the cause of missions, and into a full and abiding sense of all her responsibilities in respect of it, except by the inculcation and training of such a spirit among the young, and furnishing their minds with such knowledge, as will constitute their missionary obligations an ever-present and ever-active principle of life. It is difficult to make any religious principle so prominent as to give it constant ascendancy and activity in all the situations of life, unless that principle has been planted in early youth, and has, in addition to its divine sanction and culture, all the advantages of precedence in experience, and the sustaining, strengthening influences of cultivation and habit. All the methods, therefore, by which the youthful heart can be enlisted in the cause of missions, and the minds of youth enlightened in regard to its condition and claims, should be seized upon as the surest means to bring the Church up to the full measure of her missionary obligations. By juvenile missionary societies,

Sunday-schools, and any other agencies that may be employed, the subject of missions should be constantly pressed upon the young as a part of their education. In addition, a regular system of collections should be adopted, training them to liberality to this great object; and by lectures and the circulation of missionary intelligence through books and other channels, their minds should be constantly directed to this great object. Growing up thus imbued with missionary feeling and intelligence, they would enter upon the theatre of active life under the influence of an abiding, impelling, missionary principle, and with such a conception of the whole field of missionary enterprise, as would give that principle the most wise and suitable application. Thus trained and directed, we should have a missionary Church; but until the foundation is thus laid, all will be fitful, partial, and uncertain.

There can be no doubt, that the missionary work ought to have engaged in it the higher class of the ministerial talent of the Church. First, because it is a work which, to be well and efficiently performed, demands the highest advantages of experience, judgment, and intellectual power. No mistake can be greater than to suppose that, because the knowledge to be imparted in the mission field is elementary, therefore inexperienced and ordinary men are competent to the task. That wisdom necessary to determine the best modes of obtaining access to the ignorant and the heathen—to conduct the plans of instruction adopted—to make the best use of any advantages or openings presented—to devise and execute the schemes of aggression, and manage all the complex relations of a public and private character which grow out of the operations in which they are engaged—presupposes an amount of skill, of judgment, and of commanding talent inferior to none in any other department of ministerial action. Second, because such talent is required to give that character to missionary operations necessary to attract the confidence of those

operated upon, and necessary to awaken in the Church right attention to these interests, and to impress upon them a right sense of their magnitude and importance. Inferior men appointed to these interests, depreciate them in the estimation of the masses, discredit their importance and right position, and increase the difficulties of an awakening of a zeal and liberality in their behalf, commensurate with their real claims. As a Church, we have too much neglected this principle in the prosecution of our missionary enterprise. It has resulted from several facts. Our preachers of the higher order of talent have not themselves as yet been sufficiently impressed with the magnitude of missionary interests, to feel, in a controlling sense, the obligations upon them to enter personally into this work. A mistaken conception, both of the importance and the nature of missionary work, has created the belief, too generally, that talent of such kind would be buried in such employment, and that men of the lower ranks of qualification are best and alone suited to it. And if, from causes of this kind, the better qualified of the ministry are not excluded from this field of action, the low amount of salary which is paid to our missionaries—at least, the domestic, if not the foreign—has made it necessary to restrict the class of missionaries almost exclusively to those young, inexperienced, and moderate in the range and power of their intellects. It cannot admit of a doubt, that the cause of missions, especially in the domestic field, has greatly suffered, both as to the success of the operations themselves of missions, and the awakening of proper interest and liberality in the masses in behalf of them, by this mistaken and unwise policy. We have, it is true, occasional exceptions to this general character of the class of those actually engaged in this work, but unquestionably the cause of missions, and thereby the interest of the Church generally, would be greatly promoted by a system, which gives immediately to this cause more of the

talent and experience of the Church. The proper development of the missionary function of the Church demands a change in this policy—salaries ought to be increased, even if thereby the number of missions are diminished—the increase of qualification gained to missionaries would more than compensate, by the increase of the success of missionary results, and the deeper interest felt by the masses of the Church in these objects, any loss which would seemingly thus accrue. But this diminution of points would be in fact but temporary, for these results of improvement would give an energy and expansiveness to missionary operations, that would soon not only cover these relinquished fields, but would far outstrip all that was realized before, in territorial appropriation, as well as in the thoroughness and perfection of the work accomplished.

The missionary enterprise of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, has, it is true, already directed itself into all those various fields which, if fully occupied, would cover the whole ground now claiming her attention. These are, first, the destitute sections embraced within the limits of our existing ecclesiastical organization; secondly, the foreign population in our midst; thirdly, the black population of the South; and fourthly, foreign lands. But we maintain that the proper development of the missionary function, requires that each of those fields be more fully and thoroughly occupied.

First, the destitute sections embraced within our midst. It has been the policy of our Church, to extend her machinery of operations over every portion of the territorial limits embraced within our ecclesiastical organization; and where this could not be done through self-sustaining circuits and stations, to effect it by the formation of missions, supported out of the general missionary collections. Accordingly there is, perhaps, no portion of our widely extended limits which is not now nominally encompassed within the sphere of our itinerant operations. Still, a scrutinizing inspection will show,

that within the bounds of all our circuits even, there are neighborhoods, and sometimes whole communities, dark and uncultivated spots, which have never been appropriated by Methodist efforts, which have never been invaded by Methodist agency. Even in the best circuits of the best portions of our country, these spots are to be found, in numbers greater or less. In these circuits, there are certain fixed and definite societies, existing in different localities, some of which were formed in the early history of Methodism in the country, and others at different times since, as the result of revival influence, or of providential or accidental arrangement. These societies constitute the appointments of those who are sent to serve these circuits, and either, because of a conceived want of time, or a belief that Methodism is restricted in its capacity for aggression to these limits, or from a consciousness that no more service will be expected, the preacher is content to restrict his labors to these, and, from year to year, perseveres in the same beaten track, diverging neither to the one side nor to the other, to look up these unfrequented destitute neighborhoods. It is a fact, therefore, that all over our land, even in the best cultivated and most thoroughly Methodist portions, there exist numerous localities, greater or less in dimensions, in which the people are unserved by Methodist instrumentality, and are almost as destitute religiously as if in a heathen land. These are the communities in which occur those instances of crime which disturb the peace of society—from which come up those corrupting influences that damage the morals of society, that retard its progress, and render less efficient those agencies which it is the office of the Church to employ. We are accustomed to deplore the evils of society, and to invent human instrumentalities to remove them, but after all, whatever else we may do, we are doing but little efficiently to remove the chief source of them, as long as we fail to extend over these particular sections the enlightening,

reforming agencies of the gospel. Could these plague-spots be removed by their moral transformation and subjection, under the instrumentalities of the gospel—could these be changed from the attitude of enemies to that of coöperating friends—then would society in our midst, redeemed from these depressing, disturbing elements, arise to her rightful position of purity and power.

But how is missionary effort to be properly extended to these destitute portions of community? If, in our circuits, the appointments were properly condensed, leaving the preacher more time, especially if it were appointed as a part of his regular work, by visiting these sections, establishing, with the assistance of others, as it should be his duty, under any circumstances, as we have before shown, Sunday-schools—holding among them, at suitable central places, or if need be at private houses, night meetings for prayer and preaching—he himself might accomplish much. But there are other methods by which the instrumentality of the pulpit, at least, might be brought to bear more efficiently. As one method, there might be on these circuits, and particularly those most abounding in these dark, uncultivated regions, two preachers appointed—one of whom might, if necessary, be supported from the missionary fund, and whose duty it should be to have regular appointments in these destitute neighborhoods, at eligible places, and to seek, by the use of proper means, to organize societies among them. Or the policy might be established of employing, under the direction of the Quarterly Conferences, the local preachers in the performance of this important missionary work—it being just the field in which they could be in the highest degree useful, and in the occupancy of which, as their chief business, many of the evils of the local preacher system could be obviated, and that system be made to hold a highly available place among the aggressive agencies of the Church. Under either method, the

policy should be to have these societies incorporated into the regular work of the circuit as soon as formed, thereby extending its range, until every precinct of the land shall be added to the self-sustaining portion of the work, and become itself tributary to the power and glory of the Christian cause.

Again : in our larger cities, though they are embraced within the sphere of regular ministerial supply, and have numerous and powerful Christian societies, there are extensive districts to a large extent unappropriated by religious agency, and a large proportion of the inhabitants are as effectually without the sphere of immediate Christian appliances, as if they dwelt at the remotest distance from them. A walk through the various parts of these cities, especially on the Sabbath day, and a knowledge of those who compose the congregations of their Churches, are sufficient to convince any one of these facts ; and they are abundantly indicated by the outbreking crime of constant occurrence, and the deplorable moral condition of their inferior population. Experience demonstrates that the comparatively passive system heretofore pursued in these cities, by which the private efforts of the ministry have been confined mainly to the Church, and their pulpit efforts to the regular places of public worship, will never effectually reach these destitute classes, but that they will remain as unaddressed as if these religious agencies were totally wanting. There is required a more actively aggressive system—one which is arranged with direct reference to these classes—which seeks them out, and by positive advances accomodates all its movements to the best methods of bringing them directly into contact with the immediate instrumentalities of the gospel. There ought to be appointed missionaries to these, whose business it should be to leave the beaten track—now the appropriate walk of the stationed preachers—and going into these destitute districts.

and among these classes who never frequent the house of God, to bring to bear by conversation, by the formation, with the assistance of others, of Sunday-schools, by religious gatherings in private houses for lecture and exhortation, by preaching in the streets, in the markets, or any other places, open and suitable for such purposes, all the various instrumentalities likely to arrest their attention, and to lead them to reformation. Much might be done to aid the missionary in accomplishing these praiseworthy objects, by the coöperation of the Christian men and women in these cities, in bringing to bear their influence among these classes, to give him access by attending him in his labors among them, and by rendering such assistance in the prosecution of schemes of instruction and improvement among them and their children, as they, in their sphere, are able to contribute. Such a plan, to be successful, must be followed up with prudence and energy. Zealous, soul-loving, self-sacrificing, active, able men ought they to be who are selected for this work. But it is the only plan which can ever reach a large portion of the inhabitants of our cities. Without it, they must remain as now, destitute and heathenish, and die in our midst without appropriate effort by the Church to save them; but, adopted and wisely and energetically pursued, it fulfills all the conditions necessary to meet the moral wants of these classes. Its effect would be to diminish the amount of crime, of public disorder, and violence—to improve their thrift and to divert to employments more legitimate and useful—to increase the number who attend the regular places of worship—to establish, by occasional revivals and frequent conversions, new societies, or to greatly augment existing ones—to bring the rising generation under elevating influences, intellectual and moral, and thereby to put in motion just that system of means upon which real and permanent progress most depends.

Now, it is idle to feel that, because the agencies of Metho-

dism are brought to the confines of these destitute people in town and country, and they are encompassed within the limits of the Church's jurisdiction, that therefore the Church's obligations in the premises are fulfilled. The Church is bound to be aggressive in her agency, and Methodism is founded upon the great principle, that the Church is not to be sought for, but is herself to seek out the wayward and the lost. These people in our midst are as emphatically proper objects of missionary labor as any other in the destitute regions of the earth; and existing among us, easy of access, and capable, when converted, of becoming in a powerful sense tributary to our strength and influence, we are bound, by the ties of social relations, as well as by all the obligations of love to God and usefulness to men, to provide them the necessary facilities for their suitable enlightenment and salvation. And whatever we may be doing in prosecution of the missionary cause elsewhere, the Church's missionary function is but imperfectly developed, until this our field at home is thoroughly and completely occupied.

Secondly: The foreign population in our midst. It is one of the signal advantages of our institution of slavery, that it tends to discourage the influx of foreigners among us. Hence, while in the Northern States there is a tide of immigration, for the most part of the lowest ranks of Europe, which is introducing every species of discord and commotion, and threatens to revolutionize the whole framework of society, we are comparatively free from their intrusion and violence. Still, they are to be found in our midst, and especially in our cities, and in the more Western States. We are bound so to develop the missionary function, as to provide for them. The stability of our civil institutions, and the peace and good order of society, require the application to them of the restraining, transforming agencies of a pure Christianity. In the character in which they generally present themselves to us,

they are ignorant—enslaved by the worst forms of religion—or debased by the absence of all religion—and hence are unfit for a government so lax as ours. They are, for the most part, turbulent, violent, and ungovernable, and infuse elements of discord which unhappily disturb social peace and social progress. Self-defence, therefore, and a proper regard for our own institutions—for our own peace and progress—demand that we should use the only instrumentalities likely to subject these elements to order and mould them into the type of our own orderly citizens—the instrumentalities of an enlightened, reforming Christianity. Moreover, these people are proper objects of missionary effort. For, while most of them are without religion, or, if not, are of that class of Roman Catholics who are without a knowledge of the fundamentals of salvation, they are effectually removed from the appliances of the gospel, of ordinary application in our midst, and consequently, if not served specifically by missionary effort, are effectually shut out from all the instrumentalities of a saving Christianity. And even in reference to that class of foreigners who were in their own land taught in the right religion, without a knowledge of our own language, as to many of them, and as to all, unused to those modes among us through which they would spontaneously put themselves in the way of our regular Christian operations, they will be served by right and efficient Christian agency while here, only as they are provided for them by missionary exertion. But if we are doing any thing for the cause of missions, why not embrace these among the objects of our efforts. They are in our midst, and easy of access, and the very efficiency of the Church at home demands the removal of the antagonism they present, and the tributary influence which their proper subjection would secure. These foreigners, though living in our midst, yet still maintain many points of contact with the people they have left behind them in foreign lands,

and their conversion would open up important channels of communication with the dark regions of the old continent, through which might be made to flow back the enlightening, saving elements of a pure life-giving Christianity. Their conversion, then, would increase the missionary power of the Church, and augment her facilities in spreading the light of Christianity in foreign lands. The effective operation of missionary effort among the German population would be felt in no small degree, even in Europe; and the conversion to Christianity of the fast-increasing Chinese population of California would contribute as much to the speedy evangelization of China as could any combination of missionary effort immediately there. Every consideration, then, of duty and sound policy, demands such development of the missionary function as embraces these classes within the sphere of its most active enterprise.

Thirdly: The slave population of the South. Slavery, both abstractly and concretely, is defensible on the ground of both philosophy and Scripture. But the slave has all the relations to God which his master sustains, and the slave state cannot be lawfully used, to shut out whatever is necessary to the fulfillment of the conditions which grow out of these relations. This would be to put that power between God and his creatures to the injury of the immortal interests of those creatures, and the defeat of his purposes in respect of them. Whatever other powers and relations the institution of slavery may of right subject to human control, that control has no right to touch those which connect the soul immediately with God and eternity. The institution of slavery, therefore, must not be allowed to work a forfeiture of religious privileges and opportunities. These constitute a sphere which it must not, because it cannot lawfully, restrain or appropriate. On the contrary, the very fact of such subjection as incapacitates them for seeking and providing for

themselves religious advantages, transfers the responsibility to those who maintain this state of things, and brings them under as much obligation to provide for the slave these advantages as would the slave be, with the light and freedom of his master, to provide them for himself. If slavery implies a condition of disability, whereby those embraced in it are precluded from positive effort to secure for themselves the appliances of the gospel, then it devolves upon those who maintain this state, to compensate this disadvantage, by themselves assuming the business of supplying all the agencies which their moral relations demand. No arrangement for which man is responsible, or which he perpetuates, can be allowed to interfere with any of God's claims upon any of the children of men. God contemplates such a provision of religious privileges for the slave, when, after specifying the duties of the slave in his sphere, he says unto masters, "Give unto your servants that which is just and equal." Slavery is a patriarchal system, by which the master assumes the care of his slaves, as the parent does that of his children; and just as children must have, by the parents' act, the appliances of the gospel, so must slaves have provided for them all requisite facilities for their own personal salvation. They are in our hands, dependent as well for their eternal hopes as for their physical comfort upon us. It is with us to determine whether they shall live in heathenish degradation and perish in their sins, or whether, with such religious privileges as we enjoy, they shall rise from their moral debasement and live forever. Moreover, this relation of dependence they sustain to us, gives to us a capacity of moral power over them which will greatly enhance the inherent influence of any such agencies as are appropriate to the salvation of souls, and gives us peculiar advantages to make available these agencies in their own behalf. What master, then, who rightly appreciates the importance of human salvation and his

own final accountability, can feel that his whole duty is fulfilled — that he is innocent — while his slaves are denied all needful religious privileges? It was, doubtless, a prominent design of Providence, in recognizing the institution of slavery, that, by the relation in which it placed the enlightened to this inferior race, it would, at the same time that it devolved upon the former the duty, would secure to them the required opportunities of affording to the latter those advantages, which alone could be successful in their moral elevation and final salvation. So inferior were this race naturally, in both intellectual and moral endowment, that it is probable that nothing short of constant contact with the ameliorating influences which this institution opens the way for, could be effectual for the realization in them of the contemplated objects of the gospel. These people, in their original home, would, perhaps, have been incapable of appropriation by the ordinary instrumentalities of missionary labor; but among us, in a state of slavery, with all the advantages of access and amelioration which it allows, the gospel has facilities to render itself effectual in their ultimate triumphant evangelization, and to send them back to their original land, as they are being occasionally sent, the only missionaries likely to be successful in giving Christianity to the black races of the African continent. The very nature of the institution of slavery, therefore, and the relation which it sustains to God's own purposes, impose upon us, as a Church, the unavoidable duty to provide for the black population of the South the religious advantages they may need.

These people have immortal souls, and they can be evangelized, only as the light of the gospel is diffused among them. Apart from our peculiar relation to them as their owners, they have, in any view, as much claim upon our efforts to enlighten and save them as any other class of people — a claim stronger than that of many others, by as much as their

relative position gives us easiness of access, and every convenient facility for the use of the required efforts in their behalf. If missionary effort is demanded of us at all, these are proper objects; and no claim coming up from other quarters can justify their neglect.

The Methodist Episcopal Church, South, sustains a peculiar relation to this population. The very reason of her distinctive organization as a Church, grew out of her unwillingness to relinquish her privilege to serve the slaves of the South; and, coming into a separate existence upon this basis, she is committed before men and God to this praiseworthy work. The slave population, cut off from all relationship to all other churches, is dependent for the light that is to bless them upon those alone of the South; and to the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, more than all others, perhaps, this sacred trust is committed. Let us appreciate this high calling, and prove ourselves equal to the responsibility. The world may vent their fanatic spleen, and spend their time in vain and hollow rantings in behalf of the Southern negro, while the thousands of the destitute in their own midst are perishing in squalor and moral wretchedness; but let us, conscious of the superiority of the condition of this people above that of all others of like grade in any society—conscious of the abstract right and moral propriety of the institution itself—more earnestly than ever address ourselves to the work of their salvation, and prove ourselves their best friends, by our direct efforts to elevate their moral condition, and promote their real welfare.

The plan already adopted by the Church, in her organic capacity, of supplying the moral wants of this class by the establishment of missions among them, and the appointment of missionaries to serve them, is the most expedient and suitable. On plantations, and removed, as to a large portion of them, from the instrumentalities of ordinary employment

among the white population, these instrumentalities are not sufficient to reach them ; and even where they are so situated as to be embraced within their sphere, they need such agencies as are more specifically appointed and adapted to them. It is the extension of this plan, so as to cover this whole population, making them in their entire extent the objects of missionary effort, that the proper development of this function of the Church requires. It is hardly to be expected that the Church should convey, by missionary enterprise, the gospel to all the heathen at once. This is to be done, under any circumstances perhaps, gradually, and as the work of time ; but, embraced as this population is, under an institution in the responsibilities of which, everywhere, every man connected with it is involved, and encompassing, as the limits of the Church's jurisdiction do, the whole extent of this population, making the relation of the Church the same in respect of every part of it, there are special obligations upon the Church to make the same provision at once for the whole as for a part ; and she therefore comes short of her duty, as long as there is any portion of this extended field not fully occupied by her well-appointed missionary agency.

But it is not enough that the Church authorities provide a scheme of missionary effort, coëxtensive with the entire limits of this population, there must be, in addition, a hearty practical coöperation in these measures of usefulness by their owners themselves. First, because without their coöperation this system of means cannot have such access to those for whom it is designed, necessary to full success ; and, secondly, because owners, from their relative position to this class, and the moral influence which, by the right manifestation of zeal for their immortal interests they are capable of obtaining over them, may become the most efficient instruments in the promotion of their religious welfare. This coöperation is properly exhibited by the adoption of suitable measures to open the

way for the missionary, that he may have ample opportunity to labor with the negroes, in the use of the right means for their instruction; also, by encouragement afforded and opportunities given, to avail themselves of all the means of improvement within their range, as well those arising out of the regular system of religious agency intended for the whites, as those which arise more immediately out of the missionary system designed for them; and finally, and perhaps chiefly, in respect of Christian owners, by a bright example, by the manifestation of a personal interest in behalf of the souls of their people, by seizing frequent opportunities kindly to instruct them through private converse, and by giving such supervision as will encourage them to maintain a system of religious meetings among themselves at their own homes—in short, by the adoption of every expedient within their control, calculated to remove ignorance, to rectify the life, and to lead them in the way to heaven. Religious owners generally are without proper conceptions of their duty to their negroes, or of the many methods by which they could be useful in promoting their moral weal. Many, with all the lights of salvation themselves, are unconcerned for these, their household, who are dying from the lack of the bread of life. Many are zealously, and perhaps usefully engaged for others, while their own people, among whom they could be more efficient laborers than in all other fields, are, in respect of all religious appliances, comparatively uncared for and forgotten. In regard to this population in some quarters, it may be said, the heathen are at our doors, and if we are under obligations to extend the gospel anywhere, these our own people have paramount claims upon us. There is a rapid improvement in process in the Church, in respect of her consciousness of the claims of this people, and in the response made to them. The statistics of the Church, as well as observation of her actual history, show, that within recent years vast progress

has been made in her efforts to confer upon the black population right religious privileges. Our aim has been to show that this progress ought to go on, and with accelerated rapidity, since, until it is completed in the provision of suitable religious privileges for the whole of this people, the right development of the Church's missionary function is itself incomplete.

Fourthly : Foreign lands. The mission to China is the only one now maintained by the Southern Methodist Church in foreign lands. How limited does such operations appear, when considered in the light of the vast millions who are perishing in destitution and wretchedness, and whose means of rescue are deposited alone with the Christian world ! Nor can we be excused for this meagreness and insufficiency of effort, on the ground of our own limitedness, and that this is the whole of our just proportion of the work. The Methodist Church, South, embraces a no small proportion of all the really evangelical part of the world, and under any system of missionary enterprise which encompassed any thing like the whole extent of the heathen world, a vastly larger section than that now embraced in the few points occupied in China, would fall to her lot. And what, too, is this small mission in China, when considered in respect of the actual ability of Southern Methodism ? With the pecuniary means, and the men, to dot the whole continents of Asia and Africa and the important isles of the sea, how can she feel content with this single manifestation of appreciation of the claims of the heathen world, with this lone enterprise to fulfil her pressing responsibility to give the gospel to the destitute of the earth ? The vast work to be done by the Christian world, in the universal extension of the gospel, and to which the Church is everywhere so invitingly and pressingly urged, and the ample resources of our Church which might be rendered available to it, but which are yet unapplied, demonstrate that

the proper expansion of the Church's missionary function requires that a successful effort should now be made, greatly to widen the sphere of her foreign missionary enterprise. Whatever may be the extent of missionary effort at home, yet there is something contracted in the spirit of Christianity as long as that effort is thus restricted; and that element of expansion which gives to Christian experience and Christian manifestation its completest expression, and invests it with its highest glory and excellence, is only to be realized in the full exhibition of this higher, most disinterested form, of missionary enterprise. But missionary effort, even at home, can never be adequately brought out without the suggestive, stimulating, reflex influence of foreign enterprise. The mission to China, as small a demonstration as it is, has done more to enlist the Church in the cause of missions, to develop the spirit of missions, and to educate the Church generally to a right appreciation of their claims, than any other single agency. These foreign missions stand out as lights visible to all, constantly reminding them of their relations to this cause, and cultivating, in progressive degrees, the ideas of interest and of personal responsibility.

The Methodist Episcopal Church, South, therefore, is bound by every consideration of duty and of interest, to enlarge the sphere of her missionary enterprise abroad, by a multiplication of the fields occupied; and until she fulfills this condition, she is recreant to the responsibilities which the right development of her missionary function impose.

SECTION VI.

THE MINISTERIAL FUNCTION.

IN the Methodist Church, the ministry have the management of the government of the Church. This is believed to be both Scriptural and expedient. The terms of Church membership being already fixed by the Word of God, Church government has no function of legislation affecting the relations of the laity. Its sphere of action, as it respects the whole Church, is limited to two functions—the executive and advisory—executive, as to the laws governing the membership already established in the Word of God, and advisory, as to the plans of enterprise and usefulness proposed. Thus limited, it is perceived that though invested with the entire government, the power of the ministry over the laity is narrowly confined. God is the legislator of the Church, and his ministers are the mere executors of his laws, and the superior guides to point out the methods of his own ordainment for the progress of his cause. Thus viewed, it is evident that most of the argument which has been urged in defence of lay representation in Church government, is wholly inapplicable, founded as it is upon the false conception of the prerogative of Church government, to affect by legislative enactment the rights and relations of the laity.

Our ideas of the popular character of civil government have much contributed to give currency to the theory of lay representation in Church government, and frequently interfere to prevent right conceptions upon this subject. But it is a fundamental error, to argue from civil to ecclesiastical government. They are directly antipodal as to their sources. The one comes from the people, and has no authority except as it

is sanctioned by them : the other comes immediately from God, and derives all its authority from him, the "one law-giver." The one is created by the people, and the other is created for the people. Because they participate in the management of that which they themselves create, it is no reason they should appropriate that which they do not create, but which has its centre in the great God of all, and to which they are designed only to be subject. This fundamental distinction, as to the immediate sources of civil and ecclesiastical governments, must be kept in view, as showing that nothing can be analogically inferred from the one as to the nature of the other, touching this question. Indeed, the very fact that ecclesiastical government has its origin directly in God, and is made for the people and not by them—the very fact that it is theocratic in its character—furnishes an argument, that it is not to be popularized by a general participation of the masses in it, but rather that it is to be exclusively in the hands of the ministry, that that theocratic character may be maintained. Such a government has more of the elements which secure to it dignity and authority, and hence possesses more of the characteristics which inspire reverence for God and his law. When the masses participate in the government of the Church, their very conscious power to fashion and control it reduces it to their own level and divests it of its sanctity and awe; but when in the hands of the ministry, the very sacredness of the trust thus reposed in them tends to inspire them with an awful sense of its character and their own high responsibilities, while the removal of it above the laity, and the commitment of it to those whose office and position they regard with peculiar reverence, contributes greatly to the respect they entertain for it, and to the cultivation of a right sense of the dignity and authority of God's law. The theocratical character of Church government shows, that it is not an arrangement which men are to

seize upon to promote their own views of religious interests, but the system of God himself, authoritatively provided to regulate his own subjects, and to train them to such principles of obedience and reverence as fits them for his higher kingdom in heaven. It is not a government, therefore, which the masses fashion and control, that fulfills the true conditions of Church government, but one which is administered by those who, occupying an intermediate position in official rank between them and God, have the necessary qualifications to inspire their reverence and to enforce authority.

But there are other considerations, which place this question beyond all doubt.

Most, if not all, orthodox Churches recognize the doctrine of a divine call to the ministry. By which is meant, substantially, that God designates those persons whom he designs to be his ministers—either by some providential indications of an external character, which are clearly to be discerned, or by some internal impressions upon the mind, or by both. The ministry, therefore, by God's own designation and appointment, occupy a higher relation in the Church, and by virtue of this call, have the sanction of God as enjoying precedence and superior authority in the affairs of the Church. It would seem, therefore, that being thus set apart exclusively to the work of the Church, and sustaining a higher relation to all Church interests, and officially a nearer relation to God himself, it comports with the scheme of Heaven, that the management of whatever constitutes the immediate affairs of the Church should be committed to them. Ministers are God's own ambassadors, commissioned by himself as his representatives to manage and advance the interests of his cause: it would seem, therefore, that it is fit and conformable to his purpose, that to them alone should be given the administration of the government of his Church. And this

seems the more conclusive, when we consider the functions which alone pertain to Church government. If these embraced the legislative, so far as to effect the relations of the laity, individually, then it might be too much to intrust powers so far-reaching and important to any one class of human beings, but being only administrative and advisory, there seems to be a peculiar fitness in committing such a trust to those who, being called of God to the great work of his Church, and designated as his special representatives, must have peculiar qualifications to manage these affairs, and to secure that confidence and respect which those exercising these rights should enjoy. The executive and counsellors of all governments are supposed to be restricted to a few, selected in view of peculiar qualifications; and what class are better adapted to these high offices in the Church of God, than those whom he himself has called and set apart as specially devoted to his cause?

But we maintain that the government of the Church ought to be committed to the ministry, because they have qualifications for this business superior to those of the laity.

1. As a class, they have superior knowledge of those matters involved in the government of the Church. Confined as Church government is to its two functions, the qualifications, as to knowledge required, are a clear apprehension of law, of the modes of its practical administration, and of the methods of usefulness. Now, such knowledge, the ministry, as a class, always possess in a higher degree than do the laity. First, they are devoted more exclusively, as the occupation of life, to these subjects. While the laity necessarily, from their circumstances, can give attention to them, as the mere incidental and occasional employment of life, the ministry are devoted to them as their regular business, as the all-engrossing-aim of life. Second, because they have a more enlarged and fresher experience in respect of these matters, and con-

sequently are more fully informed as to their practical operations and relations.

2. As a class, they have more zeal and earnestness in administering the affairs of government, and prosecuting its objects. First, because they have the obligations laid upon them by their call to their work, to quicken and inflame their zeal. Second, they are free from the secular entanglements which hinder the laity, and have the interests of the Church as the exclusive concern of life. It is their business to be engaged, and always engaged, in the public affairs of the Church; and the very success of life is measured by the earnestness and constancy with which their attention is given to them. Third, because, consecrated to these sacred employments, and, therefore, in constant contact with the means of grace, they are more constantly and pressingly alive to those influences and motives which interest the soul in these high interests.

3. They have greater opportunities than the laity, to manage the affairs of Church government. First, they are not hampered by secular pursuits, but have all their time to dispose of in the prosecution of these interests. Second, their employments and relationships, as ministers, put them in circumstances in which much greater facilities are enjoyed for giving practical effect to opinion, and for projecting and realizing plans.

4. They can impart to government much more unity, energy, and promptness. These are characteristics indispensable to all successful Church organization. In the operations of the Church, law is enforced, government is potent, not by virtue of threatened penalty, but alone by virtue of the efficient, energetic action of the organization itself. It is of the utmost importance, therefore, that that organization be so constituted as to secure to its own action the highest amount of unity, decision, and energy. A government of the minis-

try, is the most favorably constituted to secure these results. First, the reverence felt toward them inspires respect for their proceedings, and confidence in their integrity and fitness. Second, the limitedness of their number, and the compactness of their body, give facilities for concert and quick decision, while their dispersed condition, in all the precincts of the land, gives opportunity for prompt and vigorous practical execution. Third, their zeal and earnestness both awaken and sustain energy among the masses, and give to all Church movements the highest vigor and constancy.

Incontestably, therefore, the ministry have more of the positive qualifications necessary to fit them for the executive and advisory functions of Church government, which embrace all that belong to it, than any other class of men.

But while they have all these superior qualifications, they have, at the same time, from the relations they sustain, thrown around them, just those restraints and safeguards best calculated to prevent an abuse of power.

The various denominations into which the people of God are and ought to be divided, will always be mutual checks upon each other, and will contribute to maintain a state of public opinion by which any excesses, any departures from the legitimate sphere of Church action, will always be at once noticed and discountenanced. In such a state of things, among an enlightened people, it will be impossible for the governors of the Church, though they may be few and confined to a certain class, to abuse their powers. Such a course, if desired by them, would be avoided, because it would be suicidal — it would arouse a storm of opposition that would soon defeat their own schemes, either by their own individual overthrow, or that of the organization upon which their authority depends; and such a course, if fallen into accidentally, or as the result of error and mistake, would very soon be corrected by the pressure of surrounding circumstances.

But there is another restraint upon the ministry, as the governors of the Church, which seems to have precise adaptation to the object, and to be an intentional result in the arrangement of God's providence.

That class of the ministry, to whom we suppose the government to be exclusively committed, is composed of men who are devoted without reserve to the business of the Church — so entirely so that, by the appointment of Heaven, they are to derive that material aid and support which they, like all other human beings require, not by their own direct efforts, but from the Church whom they govern. In this we witness a beautiful fitness. For while those who are devoted exclusively to the Church, and, consequently, understand her interests best, are to administer her affairs, those who are engaged in the employments of secular life, and are, therefore, best qualified for success in them, are to supply these their spiritual guides with the resources needed from them. And this dependence, thus felt by the ministry, is precisely of the character to furnish the motives required, in the last resort, to hold them to a faithful discharge of their high trust. As long as there is in them right piety, combined with suitable knowledge, no other guarantee is needed; but in this dependence upon the laity there is constantly furnished a motive that will be controlling, even when all others are absent, so that the assurance is given that in any, even the worse state of things, all the safeguards will be enjoyed against the consequences of an abuse or usurpation of power, on the one hand, and of indifference and neglect on the other.

While human nature is depraved, and liable to the obstructions in the path of duty which so abound in this scene of existence, it may be expected, in spite of all these barriers, that in the history of the Church, occasional instances will occur of dereliction or excess, even among the ministry, in

the administration of Church affairs; but these are liable to any system that may be devised, and, perhaps, under no circumstances can be successfully provided against. These restraints, however, are sufficient to preserve this system, as to its general operation, against all such consequences, rendering it, in fact, more safe in these respects than any other, perhaps, which the conditions of humanity will allow.

But if the ministry have superior qualifications for the management of Church government, and there are influences surrounding them, which, apart from their own trustworthiness, will insure their faithfulness in the discharge of the trust, it follows that it is to them that it ought to be committed.

But there may be those who, admitting all this, yet contend that something is nevertheless gained by a participancy of the laity in Church government—that it is an element necessary to the most complete system. We maintain, however, that so far from this being true, any infusion of the lay element, that has any potency at all, is a positive disadvantage, and to that extent, trammels and injures the system.

Any system which gives the laity coördinate, or like power with the ministry in the government of the Church, necessarily, in practical operation, subjects the latter to the former, and degrades them to an inferior position in respect of influence, in the public affairs of the Church. The laity, under any system where the pecuniary support of the Church is voluntary, necessarily wield an immense power over the ministry—a power, as we have shown, sufficiently great to insure them against tyranny and aggression, even when the ministry are the exclusive governors. When, then, by virtue of the Church's constitution, they are made equals, or if not equals, placed where they may participate in like powers, then, of course, practically their influence must predominate,

and the ministry be made to sustain a subordinate position. Nor need it be said that this advantage is counterbalanced by the reverence entertained for the ministerial office, and the advantages for influence which this confers. It is idle to maintain, that mere sentiment will long weigh against clearly guaranteed constitutional rights and privileges; and equally idle to maintain, that such sentiment will control, when to these rights and privileges are superadded the most potent of all influences, the money power. The Queen of Great Britain has the prerogative of declaring war and concluding peace, and as important as is this prerogative, yet her subjects feel safe in intrusting it to her, because the money power, so intimately involved in its exercise, is in the hands of Parliament. The world is well acquainted with the potency of this agency, and it needs no long experience to appreciate the fact, that in such a combination in the management of Church affairs, the ministerial element will necessarily succumb to the lay. We might appeal to the history of the churches for confirmation of this view, and in all churches with the lay element where this result has not ensued, it will be found that this element is so feeble as to be totally inefficient, as inoperative, as to any good as to any harm.

But what is the effect of this depression of ministerial influence — this subordination of the position of the ministry in the important affairs of Church government?

1st. It engenders a spirit of irreverence for God and his authority, and low views of the sanctity and obligation of his law. For ministers are the marked representatives of the religion of Christ, and any degradation or depression of their position, must necessarily work an injurious modification of the general estimate of its dignity and sacredness. In this state of things, all experience a sense of equality and per-

sonal independence — all idea of gradations in rank and authority is lost — insubordination and lawlessness prevail, and the ends of government are defeated.

2nd. In making the influence of the laity predominate in the management of the affairs of the Church, it necessarily trammels and hinders her movements. For, engrossed as they are in secular avocations, and confined as each individually is to a fixed locality, they of course can not manifest the same spirit of enterprise in respect of Church operations, or have the same facilities in following out projected plans, as if, like the ministry, they were exclusively consecrated to these high interests. When, therefore, their influence is so paramount, as that they are looked to as the leading and controlling movers in Church affairs, when the position of the ministry is so secondary that they cannot move efficiently, unless as they are led on and directed by the laity — then, of course, Church action in all respects must be less enterprising and efficient than when the other order obtains, of the superior and predominant influence of the ministry. Such a system, therefore, trammels the energies of the Church, retards all her movements, and perpetually holds in check all her expansive powers.

3d. It hinders the development of enterprise in respect of all those plans of usefulness which demand pecuniary expenditure. For laymen who, under this system, are constituted leaders, giving but a portion of their time to these interests, cannot be so well qualified to project, or to rally the Church to the enterprises of usefulness which the various stages of her progress justify and demand — cannot, in fact, feel that constant pressure of obligation necessary to keep them always alive to all openings of usefulness; and even if they were as well qualified to meet these responsibilities as those devoting their whole time to these interests, yet in reference to those involving pecuniary outlay, constituting as

they do the party upon whom the duty of liberality mainly devolves, there would naturally be some reluctance to enter fully upon them, so that in these respects, as long as they are leaders, the movements of the Church would always be in the rear of her actual capabilities and obligations. The laity always need that guidance and stimulus in respect of all plans of usefulness, and especially those demanding pecuniary outlay, which wise and pious heads, such as the ministry, acting independently and authoritatively, will afford. When left to themselves, many of the most useful functions are not likely to be developed, correspondingly with the demands and progress of the age.

4th. This system would work injuriously to the cause, by the various strife which it would occasion. Controlled as the Church chiefly is, under this system, by laymen of fixed localities, the tendency would be constantly manifested in each, to manage the affairs of the Church with specific reference to his own section. Narrow and circumscribed views would naturally enter into the schemes of all, and sectional strife would necessarily ensue. In this contest of section, local influence would be brought powerfully to bear, and questions would be decided according to sectional strength, rather than by high considerations of Christian responsibility. These difficulties are never experienced, in this controlling sense, when the ministry exclusively govern. The whole Church, in all its parts, especially when the itinerant system prevails, is felt to sustain the same relation to all, and being committed to them for protection and guidance, they, free from these local preferences, are left more entirely to an unbiassed judgment and an all-embracing regard, in their decisions and acts for the welfare of the general Church.

How natural it is for men thus identified with particular sections, when clothed thus with authority, to allow such strifes, particularly when attended by disappointment and de-

feat, to engender bad passions, especially those of stubbornness, envy, and revenge. How easily such authority inflates self-esteem, awakens ambition, and elicits a sense of personal claims, which too often makes selfish ends paramount to the high interests of God's cause, and which, defeated, arouse bad passions which the possessor uses his position only to gratify, and which, while they destroy his own religious enjoyment, work desolation and ruin by the conspicuousness which the Church, by her own confidence, has given to his unfortunate example. The ministry themselves are liable in some degree to these contests and divisions; but their comparative freedom from sectional bias, the compactness of their body, the closeness of their association, and consequent mutual confidence and regard, their *esprit du corps*, and the fulness and uniformity of their personal Christian experience, elevate them above many of the temptations to which their lay brethren as governors are liable, and secure much greater harmony in their exclusive administration of Church affairs.

These tendencies and unfortunate results, thus the natural sequence of this system, press heavily against an itinerant plan of ministerial operations—so much so, indeed, as evidently to render such a system totally incompatible with it.

Such, then, are the effects which would follow the introduction of the lay principle in the government of the Church, and establish beyond doubt such introduction to be inexpedient and calamitous. Should it be replied, that there are Churches in which this principle is recognized, but in whose history none of these consequences have been seen, we remark that this principle may be introduced in all degrees, from that in which it barely manifests itself, up to that in which it is thoroughly pervading and paramount. Those Churches in which it is incorporated, but which have escaped these pernicious effects, are those in which it exists in this lowest degree—in which, while it enters as a recognized ele-

ment, it is yet so limited and feeble as that, though it may be nominally claimed, it yet has in no sense the slightest power, but is perfectly inert—as lifeless as if it had no existence. It is of the principle as having activity and influence, that our remarks are predicated, and just in proportion as it has these characteristics, we feel certain they will be found to be applicable and true. There is a Church organization among us in which the lay element is embraced in all its activity and vigor, and its history furnishes a complete illustration of all we claim as to its direful operation.

The assertion that the lay element exists in this inert condition in many of the Churches which provide for it, may not be at once obvious, especially as nominally it is decidedly operative; but it is nevertheless true, and it is to be explained by this general fact, that in all these Churches there is a vast difference in the learning and intellectual status of the ministry and laity—a difference so obvious, that the latter, feeling their inferiority, have so long consented to yield to the former, that it has grown up to a large extent as a usage, and the laity, therefore, though they have a nominal voice in the control of Church operations, yet in fact, are without power of any actual impress upon them. But in the Methodist Church, between the more advanced of the laity and the mass of the ministry, there is not this difference in acquirement or intellectual elevation, and this element, therefore, once introduced into her system, would soon be not only active but controlling.

No mistake could be greater than to suppose, that justice demands a participancy by the laity in the government of the Methodist Church; indeed, there is obvious injustice and inequality in allowing them any thing like a controlling influence in her government. As before stated, their rights, under any circumstances, are guarded, first, by the nature of Church government itself, which denies to rulers any legis-

lative control over the laity; and, secondly, by the power which they have over the ministry in the control of the finances. They are, therefore, secure against oppression, even under the exclusive rule of the ministry. But the ministry are directly the subjects of Church government; for, as to them, it has a legislative function. In the Methodist Church, at least, the widest sphere of government action refers to the ministry exclusively. It has, in fact, no function of force which does not apply exclusively to the ministry. It follows, therefore, that to give the laity direct participancy in the government, would be to make them rulers in a government of which they themselves are independent—would be to subject the ministry to them as irresponsible sovereigns, as far as their power extended, than which nothing could be more unequal, or unjust, or contrary to the whole scheme of the Divine economy.

But if the ministry of the Methodist Church, as we think has been established, ought to have the exclusive management of her government, then, in addition to their pulpit duties, it is theirs to develop, under their own supervision, whatever capability of usefulness may be possible to that government. These capabilities are many: in other words, there are a vast variety of means indicated by the progress of the Church and the condition of society, which, by a proper expansion of Church government, she may be enabled to employ, which would be tributary to the improvement of her membership and her aggressive power. In the outset of the Methodist Church, both because of the weakness of her own internal resources and the condition of society, these means were impracticable, and the pulpit had to be relied upon as the almost exclusive instrumentality. These various functions of usefulness, the government could not then possibly assume. But the Church has now become numerous and powerful, her resources are vastly increased, and society, for the most part,

with more enlightened conceptions, is accessible by all Church appliances. Many arrangements supplementary to the pulpit, tending to human reformation and elevation, to the stability and extension of Christ's kingdom, and to facilitate the objects of Church organization, are now, especially in all our older communities, practicable. The time has come, therefore, when these ought to be employed; and being, as it is, the business of the ministry to control these affairs, a great demand of the times now is, an extension of its functions so as to embrace them.

That it is difficult to change the contracted policy with which the Church originally set out, is not denied. The original spirit and direction of all great movements of protracted existence, are always difficult of thorough modification and change. Hence, among the ministry, the idea, in any impressive controlling sense, that there are a vast variety of means of usefulness indicated by the condition of the Church and the wants of the world, which they are bound to set in motion as much so as they are bound to preach, diffuses itself slowly. Indeed, the very external arrangements of the Church, as far as they affect the ministry, are all unfavorable to this idea, fixed as they are with reference to the use of the pulpit merely, to the highest availability of preaching capacity, and allowing but little opportunity, and furnishing but little inducement, for attention to any subordinate agencies. While, therefore, there are to be found many preachers who feel the responsibility of making all these extensive means of doing good an integral part of their appointed duty, and are exemplarily engaged in their prosecution, yet a large, and perhaps the largest number of our preachers are restricted to the pulpit, and beyond that sphere are with difficulty, and never habitually, enlisted.

But a change must be effected. Our scheme of ministerial duty must be enlarged: its sphere of operations must be so

expanded and shaped as to cover this entire field of action. The time has come when the advisory and suggestive function of our government may be greatly widened, with advantage both to the internal condition of the Church and to her aggressive capabilities. Unless this policy be adopted, the Church will not only be recreant to her own high trust, but she will be left behind in the onward march of the forces of society—she will be overborne and overwhelmed, sunk, either by her own inertness, or by the more vigorous, active policy of competing organizations. But this expansive policy in the Methodist Church cannot be executed but by her ministry. As the governors of the Church, they are expected to lead in all her public movements. It is not difficult to train the laity under the wise direction and active oversight of the ministry; but a government in which the ministry hold the reins of power always presupposes the origination of all measures of public benefit, as well as their practical execution, to be with them. And such has been the course of the Methodist Church, so habitual the dependence of the laity upon the ministry in all her suggestive, administrative functions, that these various departments of Church action, the occupancy of which is now so much demanded, can be expected to be practically embraced, only under a system in which the ministry assume both the leadership and the actual execution.

There may be a degree of progress attained by the laity that will not allow them to be passive; when, seeing their constitutional leaders behind the age and laggard in their movements for the proper enlargement of the operations of the Church, they may be induced to take these matters into their own hands, and themselves attempt to do what properly belongs to the ministry. But whenever the laity, in activity and enterprise, thus get in advance of the ministry, a clamor for lay representation may be confidently expected.

The ministry, under such circumstances, cannot long retain the reins of power. In a government like that of the Church, in which changes may be made without fear of penalty, no one class can long retain the exclusive control, without such manifestation of entire qualification for their position which a full and faithful performance of all that is expected of them affords. The guarantees to the ministry of a permanent retention of their high prerogatives, as exclusive Church governors, rest altogether in such proofs of their fitness for them, as are given in their fulfilment of what is conceived to be the entire sphere of their duties. It is this failure of the Church, to bring into practical execution many functions of usefulness appropriate to their position, and indicated by the wants of the times—it is this falling into the rear in enterprise and in expansive Church operations, of what the prevailing sentiment of an intelligent laity recognizes as called for by the existing circumstances of the Church, that has suggested the demand, faintly coming up from some quarters, for the introduction into our system of a greater amount of the popular element. Under such circumstances, such demand is by no means unnatural: indeed, it is but a natural sequence. To suppress this faintly-rising dissatisfaction, indeed, to maintain the integrity of our present form of Church government, it is evident that the time has come when our ministry must abandon her narrow and restricted policy, and when, with a more intelligent grasp of the moral condition of the world, she must rightly judge of the capabilities of the Church for usefulness, and rest content with nothing short of the employment of every such as promises good to men.

To secure this, the ministry must be made to feel it an essential and indispensable part of their calling, and consequently of binding obligation. There is no difficulty in securing from the ministry faithful attention to the duties of the pulpit, for the reason, that being taught that it is of the

essence of their high calling to perform labor of this kind, that it is this which constitutes their distinctive and essential work, they are directed to it as that which they are bound to do, and all the obligations which press upon them to do the work of ministers at all, impel them to this as their peculiar work. Now if, in the estimation of the ministry, these other functions could be recognized as just as indispensable, and the same obligations to discharge them could be experienced, of course they would be looked to as a part of their regular business, in the same sense that the pulpit now is, and would be attended to with the same earnestness, promptness, and regularity. Their very vagueness and undefined character, heretofore, have prevented them from occupying this high place, as an integral part of the work of the ministry, and has constituted them in general estimation a field of action, the extent of whose occupancy by the ministry was for the most part optional and immaterial.

Now, to give these various duties that distinctness and prominence necessary to enlist the conscience of the whole ministry in them, as a constituent part of their regular duty, several steps are necessary.

They themselves, and the practical methods of their fulfillment, must be thoroughly understood. It is always difficult, if not utterly impracticable, to enlist the conscience in any thing as a matter of personal duty, which is but vaguely and imperfectly comprehended. And it is this principle which accounts for the fact, that the Methodist ministry have so partially incorporated these subordinate methods of usefulness. Distinct information, proper knowledge in regard to these subjects, diffused among the mass of the ministry, is the existing want. This, among honest, earnest ministers, is all they need to feel the obligation of their personal engagement in them; and this conviction of obligation among such will be intense and controlling always in the precise ratio of the dis-

tinctness and fullness of that knowledge. Every practicable scheme, therefore, ought to be adopted, to diffuse among our ministry enlightened and well-defined views of the entire range of useful operations possible to the Church. For this purpose, our annual Conferences ought to take more time for their deliberations, that they may bring fully in review all the various interests of the Church. The circumstances of the Church, in an age so progressive as ours, are constantly indicating new objects of usefulness, and new methods of enterprise, and bodies like these, composed of intelligent minds and zealous hearts, sitting upon the interests of the Church, and deliberately and solemnly devoting themselves to the proper unfolding of every indicated plan of usefulness, would be likely to know what to suggest and bring out, in organized form, as best adapted to give highest activity to the entire energies of the Church. By these deliberations, new schemes would be originated, old ones would be perfected, and light would be diffused, as to the whole range of ministerial duty. At all events, more time should be given to the missionary, educational, literature, and Sunday-school interests of the Church, and to all those matters constituting the pastoral function of the ministry. These are the great objects, in regard to which the sphere of ministerial operation now needs enlargement; and investigative attention to them, interchange of thought and feeling about them, deliberately, thoroughly, and solemnly, by these bodies of ministers in their organic capacity, would contribute much to this desirable result. The very significance thus given to these objects itself secures to them influence, and greatly enhances the estimate of their importance. In the deliberations of our Conferences, we are particular and specific as to certain departments of ministerial duty, but other departments, no less important, are ignored and neglected. What wonder, then, that all these constitute a field dark and obscure to the greater

part of our preachers, and in which so few do the work demanded by the wants of the Church and the world? In confirmation of the value of these Conference deliberations, in furnishing the light which the ministry need, to enter upon this enlarged sphere of ministerial performance, one fact will be stated. Of all these great interests to which the ministry should be urged, the missionary is sought most emphatically by the Conference, in its sessional capacity, to be impressed upon its members, and accordingly, it is this which is best understood and most thoroughly developed.

But not only should Conference occasions be seized upon to diffuse light and enkindle the zeal of the preachers, in regard to this wide field of their duty, but the press ought to be employed, as a leading instrumentality, to secure the same result. The various organs which all the important interests of the Church, as before stated, ought to have, should be conducted largely with particular reference to the enlightenment of the ministry as to their duties. And a preacher's manual, written under all the lights of the present times, and setting forth the whole sphere of ministerial objects, and specifying in minutest, fullest detail, the precise methods of action in respect of them, is now a desideratum of highest importance. Light among the preachers, like light among the membership, is now the important demand, and, if supplied, would, as to the largest number, be all that is absolutely necessary to secure the development of every ministerial capability, now demanded by the wants of the times.

But much may be done to secure the right appreciation by the ministry of these various duties, by any such steps, by the Church in her organic capacity, as affords tangible proof of her own recognition of their importance. Mere paper resolutions and verbal professions weigh but little, as long as she fails actually to provide for the assumption of these duties. The organization of Church schools, and the employment of

Conference preachers in them, have done more to enlist the ministry generally in the cause of education, as a constituent part of their duty, than all the treatises, and lectures, and admonitions upon this subject could ever have achieved. A few years ago, when the Church was doing but little for the missionary cause, either at home or abroad, it was impossible to enlist the ministry in this cause in any efficient sense ; but as soon as missions among ourselves and abroad began to be organized, and our Church gave evidence of her conviction of their value by appointing our own men to them, then our preachers began to feel their consciences enlisted — systematic methods of action were arranged, and our missionary collections went up. The appointment of those of our own body, was a standing proof of the value of this cause, which attracted the attention and enlisted the sympathies, in such degree as makes all feel that it is a cause in which they are directly and personally interested. The appointment of missionaries to China and California, has done more to convince the ministry, and to confirm conviction that missionary operations are essentially connected with ministerial duty, than a thousand Conference resolutions and missionary sermons. The same is true in respect of the Sunday-school cause. The establishment of a Sunday-school paper, and the appointment of its editor from the ranks of the ministry, has contributed, in a powerful degree, to awaken and intensify a sense of duty among the ministry as to the Sunday-school cause. Before, the interest of the Church in these matters was made known by mere speech, but here it is revealed by action, which speaks louder and more effectively than words. The same is true, as to the effect upon the Bible cause, of the appointment of agents in its behalf from the ranks of the regular ministry. The opinion, therefore, sought to be propagated in some highly respectable quarters, and maintained by many good men, that ministers are taken out of their legitimate sphere

when placed in colleges, editorial chairs, and agencies, is founded upon a false diagnosis of the principles which control the proper development of the entire range of Church functions, and ought to be rejected, as too superficial and contracted for the age in which we live. The policy should rather be, to have all these great interests represented by the Church in the persons of her own ministers—not only that thereby they might be better cared for, but that that proof might be afforded of the value of these interests, as embraced within the immediate sphere of the minister's calling, best calculated to maintain in the great body of the ministry an adequate sense of every department of duty. Such a policy affords just such intimations—just such proofs of the importance of certain lines of action, as address themselves to the senses, and none are so potent to produce conviction and to animate to effort.

There has been much improvement, within recent years, in the views of duty entertained by the mass of the preachers. A much wider scope of action is now sought to be incorporated by them. It has resulted chiefly from the labors of a few enlightened, enterprising men, who have sought to give prominence and importance to a few leading interests of the Church, by identifying them with the common objects of ministerial duty. The interest thus felt by a few soon propagates itself among the many. Interest evolves interest, and under this system the entire mass will eventually become educated to right views and sentiments, as to the entire range of their legitimate operations.

Nothing, perhaps, will contribute more to establish right views upon these subjects among the ministry, than for the authorities to which they are responsible, to hold them to faithful attention to them, as an imperative obligation, and to adopt such system of oversight and enforcement as will enable them, by pains and penalties, if need be, successfully

to accomplish the object. Preaching, and attention to appointments to preach, is held to be a necessary duty, and a system is adopted by which to ascertain every case of neglect, and to enforce the penalty which it incurs. The same plan may be adopted to secure attention to all other proper objects of the ministry. The same rigid examinations may be instituted, when the character of the preacher is brought under review by the proper judicatories, and the same penalties be enforced for neglect; and, just as this method fixes in the mind an imperative sense of the obligation to preach regularly and punctually, so will this further system of supervision create a right sense of the duties which all these other objects devolve.

But, perhaps, the most important step in this whole training process is, for the Annual Conferences to arrange the work of these preachers, with specific reference to this wide detail of duties. As long as this is not done—as long as the plan pursued ignores these duties—indeed, provides for their positive neglect—of course they will have no recognized place in the system of ministerial operations. In our old and regular stations, the system of action required of the preachers is much more extensive, embracing a much greater number of the various objects which bring out the resources and capabilities of the Church, than do our circuits. Class-meetings are better sustained—the poor are more thought of—benevolent associations are more common—collections for the support of the Church and Church enterprises are more liberal—and the state of things existing, in every way, indicates a fuller and freer exercise of the functions of the Church. The reason is this, stations requiring less of the time of the preacher to be occupied in preaching, he has more time to devote to these other auxiliary and supplementary objects, and, having more time, the system has grown up, in which he is expected by the people and re-

quired by the conference to attend to these duties. His faithfulness as a preacher, and qualification for the appointment bestowed upon him, are tested as much by the success with which he attends to this department of his duty, as by the character of his pulpit exhibitions. Circuits, however, are arranged with reference mainly to mere preaching, and so much of the time of the preacher being required for this duty, it is not expected that he give any thing more than merely incidental attention to these subordinate objects. It is the power, the success, and the punctuality of his pulpit labors, that give him currency, and furnish the test by which his acceptability is determined. Indeed, arranged as our circuits are, the opportunity is denied the preacher, whatever might be his own inclination, to give regular and systematic attention to these details of usefulness. If our circuits, retaining the same territorial limits as now, were made nearer like stations, by condensing appointments, making them thereby much fewer, it being understood that the change in policy was made for the express purpose of allowing more time to give attention to these supplementary duties, and as rigid a method were adopted to hold the preachers to accountability for the faithful discharge of these duties, as is now to secure attention to preaching appointments, then we should soon see the various agencies of Methodism, as constituted of the class-meeting, the Sunday-school, benevolent organization, and financial collections brought into use all over the country, as we now find them in our best organized stations. The idea would not then be, that preaching constituted the whole business of the preacher, but that attention to every interest calculated to give compass and efficiency to the Church, and improvement to the people, was equally a part of his appointed business, and while the people would receive no less preaching, but in this respect would be equally as effectively served, all subordinate methods of doing good, as

the result of a felt necessity, would be everywhere brought into efficient exercise.

If it be said, that the change of the policy of six and four weeks' circuits into those of two, which as respects the leading motive was made to accomplish these very results, has demonstrated by its own working, that this scheme proposed would itself prove a failure, we reply, first, that this example cannot be taken as indicating any thing as to the probable success of the movement we propose, for the reason that, though it was a change which reduced the territorial limits of the circuits, yet it did not reduce the amount of preaching required, sufficiently to furnish opportunity, or an obvious ground of duty, to assume these additional labors. It was a change, but not a change in those respects to conform it to this result. It did not go far enough. If it had reduced the amount of preaching required so far as that, by the reduction, an obvious vacuum was left to be filled by these duties, then, because both of the preacher's own internal convictions, and of what he would know was expected of him by others, he would be impelled to assume them. But, secondly, this example proves nothing as to the movement we propose, because under that change, while it is expected that the preacher will attend to these various departments of Church interest incidentally, and his usefulness and position is promoted by such attention, yet there are no such regulations imposed, as we suggest, by which the preacher is held to account for their neglect, and his character and relations are made largely to depend upon his faithfulness in regard to them.

Now, we do not propose this modification of our system everywhere. It is only in older communities, where a large proportion are embraced in the Church, or are familiar with the principles of Christianity, that these auxiliary instrumentalities can be very usefully employed. These instrumentali-

ties are only directed and available in a condition of society, like that of most of our older communities, which has been produced by a very general prevalence of Christian principle. It is, therefore, only in reference to such communities, that we suggest this change of system. In those sections, found in all our States, and abounding in our newer States, where society has not yet been subjected by a knowledge of the gospel, and the masses are yet unconverted, and where, therefore, preaching is the almost exclusive instrumentality adapted and available, we would have our system remain just as it is, for, established with direct reference to this state of things, in its almost exclusive employment of the preaching element, it is, perhaps, unsusceptible of improvement.

But in respect of these older communities, where preaching is but a part of the great system of means which may be rendered profitable, we maintain that this modification of our plan is imperatively called for. For mere knowledge of duty will not always secure its performance, until the external machinery is itself properly arranged to bring out this result.

There can be no doubt that this expansion of the sphere of ministerial operations, requires a higher standard of qualification than is now reached by the mass of the ministry. Many leading minds in the Church feel this, and to fulfill this condition, have thought of various plans. It has, however, been the general opinion, that it is an intellectual improvement that is now required. This is a fundamental mistake. It is an improvement in the qualities of zeal and of self-denying, self-sacrificing devotedness, that is now the specific desideratum in the ministry, and, if secured in proper degree, all else would follow necessary to their complete efficiency. These are the paramount qualifications, and every true system for the attainment of a right ministry makes these qualifications the test, rather than such as pertain to

the intellectual capacities, and their cultivation paramount to that of the mere intellect.

The success of preaching and of ministerial labor generally, unlike all other instrumentalities intended to control the minds of men, does not depend essentially upon human qualifications of any kind, but upon divine influence. Those qualifications, therefore, of supernatural gift, the bestowal of God himself, and on account of which he is pleased to vouchsafe his divine sanction and help—that is, the qualifications of faith, of zeal, and self-consecration—are those which adapt the ministry to success—are those in fact which constitute their fitness for this work.

If we attentively consider, with perceptions illuminated by a true Christian faith, the purely spiritual objects of Christianity, it will be abundantly evident that the capabilities of the preacher to induce the world to embrace them, are dependent more upon his own spiritual attainments and the energy with which he, by example and direct effort, urges to them, than upon any qualifications of head or heart, of a purely human character.

If we look out upon the wide sphere of duty to the occupancy of which the ministry is urgently called, we shall find that zeal and energy are more necessary to their success than mere knowledge. We shall find that the great desideratum is not capacity to understand, but heart to perform—that a self-sacrificing spirit of devotion to the great ends of usefulness is the grand element needed, and which, if fully realized, would soon bring into action whatever is required to compass the entire range of ministerial objects. Give the ministry right hearts, bring them under the domination of right motives, in all their strength and fulness, and ways and means will never be wanting to all that usefulness appropriate to the Church, and demanded by the wants of the world.

The forces of the gospel are already arranged by God him-

self, and an aggressive power infused into them from the same divine source. All that is necessary, then, to their success, is an application of them to the people, by those divinely commissioned to this work; and as zeal and self-denying labor are the qualities upon which the extent and faithfulness of this application depends, they are of course the paramount qualities in the ministry.

The history of Methodism demonstrates the superiority of these qualities—in fact, the great truth that the success of the ministry turns essentially upon them. Her advancement has been more rapid than that of all other Christian organizations, and the world concedes that it is to be attributed, under God, to that system which made these qualities the most highly valued and controlling ones in the operations of her ministry.

A rationalistic view of religion, which gives undue preponderance to the mere human side of religious instrumentalities, will always expect success only in the use of such means as human reason would suggest, as something like correspondent with the result; but he who remembers that this is God's work, and that the really saving appliances are from him, will feel that it is rather those qualities which he himself inspires—faith and zeal, and the spirit of self-sacrificing toil, that are the proper means to success.

Such a view of man, as the instrument, comports with his relations to his Maker—it sinks the human into the divine efficiency—it makes him, it is true, the active instrument, but it maintains him in his own humbling view of his own worth, and gives to God what is due him—all the glory.

The impression among many, of the high intellectual position proper to be attained by all the ministry—an impression so decided, as to create the belief that it ought to be a controlling standard of qualification for admission into the ministry—is founded in great mistake, and fatally mischievous

in its tendency. Christ called the majority of his apostles from the humbler walks of life, and most of the preachers who in the progress of Methodism have been called, and who have been most extensively useful, have been taken from the lower or middle ranks of society, and had been brought up for the most part, in great destitution of intellectual advantages. There is meaning in these facts. Christianity is religion for the masses, and Methodism especially is the people's religion. If it were intended only for the wise, it might be that only the wise would be called, but "the poor have the gospel preached to them," and, intended for all the people, the bulk of those called it is intended should be from that rank which allies them in sympathy to the masses, and of that intellectual grade which puts them into intellectual affinities with the body of the people, and necessitates such modes of thought and of intellectual exhibition as adapts them to general usefulness. Intellect, therefore, or a certain intellectual status, does not seem to be the standard which, in any controlling sense, is to govern in the production of a right ministry. It would be well for the Church to abandon any such conception, and let God's own order, which is to call men from all ranks, but mainly from the masses, indicating thereby his purpose to constitute his ministry of all grades of intellectual attainment, regulate this important interest.

The settlement thus of this order manifests the wisdom of God. For while it has a philosophic adaptation to the great object of spreading religion among all classes, by precluding in his ministers the temptation to rely upon merely human resources, it develops the qualities of faith and zeal—the divinely appointed instruments for the accomplishment of their important work. It is but in harmony too with his great purpose, that the world should feel that it was not the instruments used that achieved these great results; and, by a per-

vading consciousness of the insufficiency of these in themselves, to make necessary a sense of dependence upon him for any success, and the attributing to him all the glory. "God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise ; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty." It is, therefore, to attempt an improvement upon God's own plan, to do violence to his own arrangement—to set aside his own system—when any plan is attempted, arbitrarily to elevate the ministry to some higher definite standard of intellectual attainment.

Intellect, it is true, is an essential element ; but it is to be obtained not by arranging the immediate system, which develops the ministry with specific reference to it. The system which seeks to make faith and self-denying zeal the paramount qualities, in any right state of things otherwise, will always secure it in any degree required.

This system in itself powerfully tends to develop intellect. It brings into constant and intense action whatever of intellect is had, and thereby gives it improving exercise and expansion. These qualities which it makes predominant, from their nature, are always stimulating to self-improvement, and to the use of such means as contribute to the increase of the strength and resources of the mind. Indeed, it is a system which is always acting upon mind as a forcing process, both by virtue of its own necessary effect and the means to improvement, the use of which it is always suggesting and urging. Its tendency in these respects is seen in the history of Methodism. This was her system in former years more than now, and such has been its efficiency in eliciting intellect, in giving to intellect the most favorable chances for improvement and elevation—such has been the number of the distinguished instances in which it has raised men from obscurity to the highest positions of intellectual power and

attainment—such has been the exhibition of its capacity to fulfill well-nigh every condition for the right education of the ministry—as to afford indubitable proof that such a system furnishes the best of all schools for the intellectual training of the ministry, that, given a system in which faith and zeal and self-denying toil are mainly looked to and provided for, and the realization of whatever of intellect is needed, is a necessary sequence.

The kind of intellect which this system of supreme reference to qualities of the heart, rather than of the head, secures, shows still further its potency to provide in the ministry the needed intellectual element. After all that may be said of the value of learning, in itself considered, yet, intended to operate mainly upon the masses, the intellect which the great body of the ministry needs is such as is trained in the knowledge of the modes of thought, tastes, dispositions, and habits of the people, so as to be capable of an appreciation of, sympathy with, and adaptation to them. It is only when the people are understood, their peculiarities of thought and modes of life appreciated and recognized, that the ministry can apply themselves to them, or enjoy their fullest confidence and sympathy. Politicians, and many others in secular pursuits, who desire to impress the masses, understand this principle, and hence, in all their exhibitions, seek to adapt themselves to the popular standard. Preaching must be popular, and all the movements of the ministry designed to regulate the social characteristics of life, all practical enterprises, involve necessarily an intimate knowledge of the people, and cannot otherwise be successfully conducted. But it is a system like that of Methodism, in which the qualities of religious experience, and of the heart, are regarded more important than those of the head, and which sends men immediately out into contact with the people, under the itinerant plan of operations, that fulfils these conditions, and secures a

ministry thus trained. Methodism owes its success, in great degree, to the training which has been thus given to her ministry. The itinerancy brings the preacher directly and at once into contact with practical life, and while it secures an increasing knowledge of men as they are found on the great theatre of action, it disciplines his powers and modes of popular adaptation to the actual wants of his hearers. The itinerancy is the best of all schools to secure the kind of intellect important in the ministry. Properly regulated, it is not unfavorable to the acquisition of theological learning—some of the most learned divines have grown up under its training; but the learning acquired is such as may be directly available to the great purpose of immediate usefulness, while the mental discipline secured is just such as popular efficiency demands.

Though it may be true, that the intellectual element supplied to the ministry under this system of supreme reference to the qualities of the heart, may not, generally, be distinguished for its learning or accomplishments, still it will be of that character adapted to success, and to the spread of religion in all classes of society. Methodism proves this, and her progress among all ranks, the highest as well as the lowest, to a degree that brings her abreast in the intelligence and social position of her subjects and friends with any other Christian organization of the land, shows that this system, thus far, has been adequate to prevent any depression which any insufficient supply of the needed intellectual element might have occasioned.

But it may be said that, conceding all we claim as to the effect of the system we advocate upon the intellectual improvement and training of the ministry, still, in an educated age, a higher degree of intellect and learning is required than can be expected as the legitimate fruit of this system, and which must be provided. This we grant, but contend that it must be supplied, not by substituting another system, but by

supplementing this. It is to be done by the improvement of the general material out of which God has to select his ministers, so that when men come into the ministry, they shall already be on a higher intellectual level: in other words, it is to be done by the proper execution of the educational function of the Church, and a general provision thereby for the educational interests of the people. Then the intellectual cast, of at least a large class of those called to this high office, will be improved, and its proper quota of learning and accomplishment will be gained, without the necessity for any direct arrangement of the plan of the ministry with reference to a purely intellectual standard, but in a manner allowing the carrying out of God's own order, and maintaining the great system we contend for, of a supreme reference, in all that pertains to ministerial qualifications, to the active qualities of the heart.

God intends to link one duty with another, and to make the completeness of the intellectual qualifications of the ministry dependent, not upon conformity to any standard of intellect, but upon the discharge of duty in the general education of the people. It is education, generally diffused, which makes educated preachers necessary, and God intends that we shall have the latter not before the time, but only on the occurrence of that contingency upon which they are in place and necessary. The divinely appointed way, then, to get the right amount of education and learning in our ministry, is to scatter broad the facilities of education, under the sanction and direction of the Church. Our history proves this. Before the Methodist Church turned her attention to the education of the people, the supplies to her ministerial ranks were almost exclusively from the more illiterate classes, but since the establishment of her colleges and high schools, her ministry has been receiving annual accessions from the ranks of the educated. And if her supplies from this source are not suffi-

ciently rapid, and the improvement of her ministry, in educational respects, does not correspond with the march of social progress, it has only been because of the limitedness of her educational provisions. Let her not, then, seek to supply the lack by altering her system, so as, by its own arrangement, to secure a conformity to a certain higher intellectual standard; but let her attribute the defect to the right cause, and seek to supply it in the only just and practicable way, by supplying her people more largely and generally with the facilities of a sanctified literary education.

There are those who believe that a regular theological education, dispensed through regular theological seminaries, is the only system whereby to secure the amount of intellectual qualification indispensable to the ministry. It would seem, however, that this question ought to be considered, by all Methodists at least, as put to rest by the experience of the Churches. There are ecclesiastical organizations in which this system obtains, and though it creates for them a learned ministry, yet it is evident that, as it respects the great work of saving souls, and of subjecting the world to the dominion of Christ, which all must admit to be the great objects of the ministry, the Methodist ministry, who are trained without this system, have proven themselves far more capable and efficient. Learning is beautiful and always to be admired, and when it comes into the ministry, as a providential arrangement, under such a system as is legitimate, it subserves a most valuable purpose. But success, after all, is the chief consideration, and to ignore it, that we may fulfil an ideal conception of beauty and fitness, is both unwise and criminal.

But there are positive objections to this system that are insuperable.

1. It secures a kind of training which restricts the range of preaching to the more cultivated classes of society. The design of it, when carefully analyzed, will be found to be, to

create a style of preaching with reference to these classes. It is ascertained, it is contended, that preaching is not sufficiently critical, or learned, or profound; but for whom? not for the great mass of mankind, because such preaching is above them, is unsuited to their capacity, but for the more advanced of society; and to improve it in these particulars, and thereby to adapt it to these higher classes, it is proposed to establish schools of theology in which the requisite advantages are afforded. Nor do these schools fail to secure the desired result. First: they train the mind in that peculiar learning, and to those habits of technical criticism and nice distinction which make the topics treated, as well as the methods of treating them, unsuited either to popular taste or to popular apprehension; and, secondly, the consciousness of the unadaptedness of this kind of preaching to which they are thus trained, to the populace, and of its suitableness only to the intellectual classes, itself creates a tendency to ignore the former and to direct their energies mainly to the latter. Men soon discover their own style of preaching and the classes which most appreciate it; and when these are ascertained to be the most elevated and influential, many reasons conspire to produce a disregard of the inferior, and a restriction of effort to such congregations only as are considered intelligent and refined.

These proofs of the tendency of theological seminary training to restrict preaching to the higher and more favored classes, are confirmed by the history of those organizations in which this training is an indispensable ministerial qualification. In reference to every one of them, it may be safely said, that they attempt but little among the masses—that they confine their efforts almost exclusively to those regarded as the upper classes; and that it is only among them that they have any success. They have ascertained, that it is only among them that their preaching is appreciated and useful,

and they, therefore, restrict their operations within their limits. There is a system for the educated and refined; and if the masses of mankind were dependent upon them alone for the bread of life, and those influences which would thoroughly reach them, the period of the world's conversion would, doubtless, be indefinitely postponed. A system thus contracting the capabilities of the ministry, is unsuited to the demands of the world. Diffusion among the masses is the great law of Christianity, and that system which allows of the largest adaptation to them, is best calculated to hasten the progress of society and the evangelization of the world.

2. It impairs in many respects the usefulness of the ministry.

First: By its tendency to divert the attention from the object of preaching to the instruments involved in preaching. The stress laid upon theology, as an objective system, implied in the existence of these seminaries to teach it, and this devotion to it for a protracted period, under the direction of regularly appointed masters, naturally tends to impress the mind of the ministry with such an exaggerated sense of its importance, as to cause more attention to be given and importance attached to the doctrine which is preached, and the manner of its presentation, than to the ends which that doctrine is intended to accomplish — as to make the idea of the truths presented more prominent than that of the subjective, or practical results as to those who hear, which those truths are intended to produce — as, in short, to make the mere medium paramount in the conceptions of the preacher to the objects on account of which alone that medium is valuable. In other words, the tendency of this theological training is to reverse the divinely appointed order in the conduct of pulpit operations; for, whereas good to others, positive effect upon others, ought always to be paramount and to govern the character of preaching, both as to its topics and modes, this

system develops the opposite method, making the idea of the true end to be accomplished secondary and subordinate to these, the mere instruments to be employed. Such is the inevitable effect of this system. When men are thrown out at once into the field of active effort, they necessarily soon become engrossed with the ideas of good to others, as the immediate object before them : the whole aim of their efforts assumes a practical cast, and the question of positive usefulness is always paramount ; but when they perceive that mere theology is deemed by the authorities of the Church so important as to demand their being held back from this active field for so long a period, to pursue the simple study of it, and their idea of its importance is still further magnified by the expensive arrangements for the mere instruction of it, and by the constancy and length of their exclusive attention to it, without reference to, and, indeed, to the neglect of the actual results which alone make it valuable, inevitably they will come to attach an exaggerated importance to it, insomuch that the idea of it, and of the manner of its presentation, will prevail over all considerations of the actual objects and purposes of it. Facts prove this. Those ministers whose training has been in contact with the people, are generally found to be governed, in their topics and modes, by circumstances, and to feel that effect is the primary and controlling consideration : while, on the other hand, those, as a class, who are trained in the schools, show that nice distinctions, critical disquisition, and logical force in the maintenance of orthodoxy, are mainly regarded, and more interest is felt to uphold doctrine, than, by an adaptation to the existing condition of things, to further actual spiritual results.

Second : By its tendency to make preaching less efficient.

This follows, of course, from its tendency, just stated, to divert the mind from the true ends of ministerial effort.

When men are the objects to be impressed and moved, they must be studied, and the system of instrumentality employed must, as far as possible, have a precise and specific adaptation to them. Preaching, therefore, to be most effective, must be such as is suggested by an intimate knowledge of the actual condition of the people, and is directed with reference to their nature, their precise wants, and circumstances. This system, therefore, which tends to keep the mind away from these points, and to make them secondary to other objects—which tends to the disregard and neglect of them—must greatly contract and neutralize the real capacities of the pulpit. Preaching, under such circumstances, and thus exhibited, may be highly intellectual and learned, but it cannot be relied upon as pertinent and calculated to produce, in highest degree, useful results. Such preaching, in the style, the thoughts, and the modes of thought, is often without reference to existing circumstances, and any adaptation to those upon whom it should act.

There is, too, in this training which so much magnifies the importance of objective theology, a proneness to rely upon it—upon the mere truth and the logical force with which it is presented, to the exclusion of that kind of faith which insures the divine help, in all these ministrations, and without which all else is unavailing—to believe that mere truth is enough in itself to bring men to the saving embracement of it, without a recognition of the spiritual element, which merely uses this truth as an instrument, and without faith in which all else is inoperative and nugatory. Methodist preaching, the world must acknowledge, when considered in respect of effect in the production of changes in the experience and the life—in short, in respect of the great ends of preaching—has been more successful than that of all others. Yet in all that pertains to technical theology, to learning, and critical exegesis, it will be readily conceded that,

as a mass, it is far behind the ministry trained in the theological schools. The explanation is found in the fact that, instead of relying upon mere theology and employing itself mainly about it, in the ministrations of the pulpit, keeping all other objects comparatively hid from view, its object has been to keep the eye steadily fixed upon the great results in others, for which preaching is intended, and by the study of men, their habitudes and tastes, as practically existing, to employ such agencies, to deal with such topics, only as were of practical adaptation. Theirs has been not a cold abstract preaching about matters which, though they might reach the head, left intact the heart, but a practical soul-stirring preaching which, applying to men as they actually existed, had access to their will, and, under God, subjected them to its sway. With them, too, the truths which make up theology were but mere instruments—a system of machinery through which God manifested himself in spiritual power to men, and employing them as mere instruments, the all-absorbing reliance was upon God, and the spiritual element was recognized as the chief and all-pervading agency.

The truths of the gospel—the presentation and enforcement of which are most successful in doing good to men—are so simple and easily comprehended, that practical good sense, zeal, and faith are the qualities most in demand in the preacher. And though learning, as properly understood, when strictly subordinated and made subsidiary to these paramount qualities, is a great and often indispensable auxiliary to usefulness, yet, liable as it is in many to be a mere mass of acquisition instead of an incorporated, subjected element—to be the object of supreme attention and display instead of a mere instrument for use, and, therefore, rather a hindrance than a means of usefulness—a system which makes it an indispensable qualification in every case is an unfavorable one for the attainment of the most efficient ministry.

3. It hinders the realization of the highest zeal in the ministry.

Those motives in the ministry which are the strongest, which elicit most of the spirit of self-denying, laborious devotion to the interests of souls, are derived from suitable impressions, not simply of the instruments, but of the ends of preaching. It is a proper apprehension of their importance, that stirs the soul of the minister to its deepest foundations, and awakens the strongest desires to be useful. These are the chief objects of reference — those on account of which alone the machinery of the gospel was arranged : of course, therefore, they must have a relation to the soul that gives them more power to interest and elicit zeal, than objects that are merely secondary — they must constitute the reasons of motive — the appointed objects to elicit and sustain it. It is the energy with which the worth of souls is forced upon the mind — it is the consideration of the importance of human good — that prompts the sacrifices of the devoted missionary, and secures all those triumphs over the flesh and the world, involved in the labors of the most zealous workers in the vineyard of the Lord. That system, therefore, which is best calculated to maintain these objects in the mind, prominently and pressingly, as the prime reason and ground of all ministerial labor, must be the most favorable to the fullest ministerial zeal. But, as we have seen, the system of ministerial training by theological seminaries is not of that character — its tendency being rather to divert the mind from these objects as matters of supreme and controlling reference — to hold these as secondary, and to look mainly to what is designed to be the mere instruments for the attainment of these objects. Hence it is a system unfavorable to the maintenance of right ministerial zeal. It cannot be that a system which so much stresses mere theology, and requires an expenditure of so much time and labor merely in it, and

the engrossment of so much of the attention in simple acquisition, can be so favorable to the full impression of those ideas of usefulness that come up from the proper objects of usefulness, as that system under which the mind is set loose to come into constant contact with these objects, and is required to think and feel directly and chiefly in reference to them. The mind is so constituted as that, when it is mainly occupied with one set of ideas, all others have less capability of securing admission into it, and less power of control over it.

The conclusion thus deduced, as to this effect, is confirmed by facts. There may be zeal, as there often is, in that ministry thus trained; but it will be generally found to be a zeal chiefly in behalf of learning and doctrine, and manifested in the prosecution of those habits of study and of intellectual labor, originally formed and insisted upon in the seminaries, rather than a zeal directly in behalf of the good of human souls. It will be a zeal which will refer, as its immediate object, to the machinery of the gospel, rather than to the results of good which that machinery is designed to secure. And the cases of exception will be found to be those in whom the effect of this training is least visible—who, full of natural benevolence and religious devotion, and highly practical in their order of mind, have, in spite of its legitimate tendency, become engrossed with these, the proper objects of the ministry, and from them have derived the right zeal of the minister—a zeal in behalf of human salvation.

It has been the glory of Methodism, that its tendency has been to make the results of usefulness paramount to all other considerations, by which, while the zeal of her ministry has been maintained in the highest degree, it has been directed to its proper object—that of direct benefit to the souls of men. To substitute a system whose tendency would be, to make secondary objects so far the aim of the ministry as to

engross a large share of its care and attention, would not only be to diminish its zeal, but to make that zeal come short of what ought to be its all-absorbing object.

A ministry conscious that their preaching is suited to certain classes only, and who, therefore, direct themselves mainly to them, and who cannot see much immediate fruit from their preaching, it being directed rather to the logical consciousness than to the affections, cannot have that all-pervading zeal—that energetic, self-sacrificing desire to labor for the weal of others, that those have whose business it is to adapt themselves to all men, who set themselves out upon the broad world to labor anywhere, and among all classes, and whose faith and purpose are constantly encouraged and directed by the glorious effects they ever witness, as following from their labors.

There is a mannerism too—a fixed method of procedure—contracted in these seminaries, and which, gained under the sanction of what is recognized as the highest authority, is apt to be cleaved to with tenacity, that has a restrictive, constraining influence upon the preacher, and prevents that expansion and practical exhibition of ardor and zeal necessary to realize fully their appropriate fruit.

The ideas which men receive in the outset, in any department of action, as to the spirit and aims which are to control them in it, are apt to continue dominant throughout their whole future course. There is a potency in preëccupancy of mind, which hardly anything afterwards will ever neutralize. And it is upon this principle that the importance which, by the very existence of these seminaries, as well as the training imparted to them, is made in the minds of young preachers to attach to the intellectual standard of qualification, is apt to make their conceptions of ministerial life and calling of a character incompatible with the experience of faith and zeal, and the spirit of self-denial, as controlling qualities.

Should it be said, that education itself, in its liberal forms, would produce these same effects in the ministry which we ascribe to theological seminary training, and that, therefore, to object to the latter would be to object to the former, we reply, that there is a difference between education of a literary and scientific character, which is dispensed alike to all men for whatever calling, and an education of ministers with a direct reference to their calling as such. In the one case, it is merely preliminary, furnishing simply the basis for the superstructure; but in the other, it gives the superstructure: the one merely puts the mind where it is prepared to receive the mould which its future vocation may give it—the other gives the mould, is in itself professional, and determines specifically with reference to the calling embraced. It is evident, therefore, that the one has an effect which the other has not—that while the one is always desirable, the other, because of its specific tendencies, may be objected to and resisted.

There are many other insuperable objections which might be urged to the system of theological seminaries, but it falls not within our purpose to notice them, inasmuch as it was only our object to show their incompetency to contribute any thing of real worth to the intellectual element of the ministry. Having, as we think, done this, we fall back upon our original position, that the qualities of the heart, such as faith, zeal, and self-denying devotion, are the highest qualifications of the ministry; and that the order of the ministry ought to be so arranged as to make these qualities both the standard, and, as far as possible, predominant in all its operations. Such an arrangement is in itself, when the educational function is properly cared for, competent to educe in the ministry every needed element, and the only one calculated to make the ministry the great agency which Heaven designs it to be in the work of the world's evangelization.

The system of the Methodist ministry, though designed in its constitution to make these qualities paramount, and, in many respects, not without success, yet in its details has defects, on account of which this result cannot certainly be relied upon. Hence, as long as the system remained under its original impulses, its original design was realized; but as soon as these began to cease in their controlling influence, and the system had to rely upon the energy of its own organization for the maintenance of these tendencies, these defects began to show themselves, and the incapacity of the system in itself to maintain in ascendancy its originally intended paramount spirit, began to be evident.

It is not too much to say that, even in the Methodist ministry, it has become by no means uncommon to hold the sacred calling in the light of a mere profession, in which the whole that is to be done and immediately regarded, consists in a certain round of performances, which when gone through with, the claims of men are satisfied, and all that is important is accomplished—a mere mode of life, in which, instead of regarding the labors performed as simply means to an end, as an instrumentality to accomplish results, and being satisfied in the use of it only as it is successful in accomplishing these results, which is the view and the feeling of a true ministry, the whole interest terminates in the mere instrumentality itself—so that when the conventional notions of the world are satisfied, and the instrumentality itself is honored or escapes censure, they themselves are satisfied that their mission is fulfilled.

This secular, professional character, which, in the estimate of many, attaches to this high and sacred calling—so fatal to all right purpose and zeal, and success in the conduct of it—so degrading to it, and injurious to the cause of Christianity—manifests itself in various ways. First: In the absence among ministers themselves of all definite expectation of any imme-

diate, positive effects of good to follow their ordinary ministrations, and of any all-engrossing desire to see such results attending their efforts, so that the lapse of long periods of time, without seeing any good accomplished by themselves, excites no concern, and is perfectly compatible with entire contentment and self-complacency. This was not the feeling of our earlier preachers, or the view they had of the office of the ministry. Such was their conception of its design — such their faith in its power — their sense of its responsibilities, and their all-conquering zeal — that, not only did they expect to see immediate results of good following their labors, but in every sermon, in every exhortation, and in every prayer, they labored with the view to immediate good, and could be satisfied only with the consciousness that they were successful in this respect. Secondly : In the perversion of the ministry from the great end of pleasing God to that of pleasing men merely — in the tendency to make the office of the ministry a theatre for human display, and for winning the admiration of men, rather than an instrumentality for furthering the objects of God by making men wiser and better. So that reputation among men for talent and taste is more highly prized than favor with God for success in saving souls and reforming the world — so that to be prominent is a leading aim and reputation, is too precious to be jeopardized, even when the interests of immortal souls are at stake, and an effort might decide their fate. Thirdly : In the dread of labor, and the adoption of that rule by which ministers determine the amount of labor they will perform, not in answer to the question how much they can endure, but how little they can do to escape the censures of the public, and of the governing authorities. Fourthly : In the effeminacy characteristic of many, in consequence of which, flimsy excuses are framed to avoid labor, and trifling ailments, which would never prevent men from doing what they have a heart to do, are used as a shelter under

which to secure themselves from labors and sacrifices in their appropriate field.

The question then arises, what alterations can be made, and what policy can be adopted, so as to make the system itself of Methodism competent to provide a ministry, in which these qualities of right paramount are always in the ascendant and controlling? For let it be understood, that as long as humanity is subject to the conditions of earth and time, that even in the high matters of the Church, men cannot be relied upon, when left to themselves, to conform to their high relations, even though surrounded by all the advantages which knowledge, however exalted, can afford; but it is organism which Heaven has appointed to make these results sure. It is by means of organization, therefore, that a right ministry is to be obtained and perpetuated.

Now, to make organization subservient to the end of providing a rightly constituted ministry, three conditions ought to be fulfilled.

1. That it so arrange, that none get admission who do not possess the right qualities in their proper degree. As long as a half-hearted class of men, who are so trammelled by conditions and mental reservations as to be disqualified for entire consecration to the work, are allowed to get into the ministry, in spite of all efforts afterwards properly to elevate and direct them, the general standard of ministerial faithfulness will be lowered. They contribute to depress it, not only in that they occupy the places of ministers, while they but imperfectly represent the class, but by their depressing influence, in virtue of their example and sentiments, upon the zeal and energies of others. It is indispensable, therefore, that the conditions of admission be such as will effectually keep out all who fall below the right standard of qualification.

2. That it so arrange, that a clearly-defined sense of their

call to the work shall be the motive that impels men into the ministry.

A definite, indubitable sense of a divine call to the ministry is the only motive sufficiently strong to enable men to submit to the self-sacrifice which a full and faithful discharge of all the duties of the ministry involve, and it is the only motive which will urge men to those positive disinterested acts of usefulness which the highest efficiency of the office of the ministry implies. All other motives to this vocation, men may subordinate to their own philosophy and convenience, so as to make their standard of ministerial life subject to their own pleasure; but this motive refers the whole matter to God, both as to what is required and the success desired—it involves conscience and every religious conviction—fed by the Holy Ghost, it is for ever fresh and vigorous, and rising above considerations of earth and time, it is as enduring and as active as faith in God and the hope of heaven. If, then, we would obtain a ministry sufficiently self-sacrificing to submit to every hardship, and sufficiently zealous spontaneously to appropriate every practicable mode of usefulness—a ministry whose views of duty and of usefulness are not dependent upon convenience or the conventional notions of men, but are on a scale of magnitude and expansiveness bounded only by the limits of human endurance and of human capacity—we must make the conditions of admission such as that all who become ministers are prompted and controlled alone by a consciousness of a divine call to this sacred work. Thus impressed and moved, such a ministry will start with a just view of their responsibilities, and fully committed to them, and triumphing over all worldly considerations, will henceforth know nothing but labor and service in the vineyard of the Lord.

Men sometimes go into the ministry from motives that are

pure, yet they are lower than this standard—perhaps from mere religious fervor and desire to be useful. But these motives, dependent as they are upon mere spontaneous promptings and variable moods, will never sustain human nature under severe trials, nor urge to enterprises and activities which involve continued labor and great personal sacrifice. And it may be, that it is because our ministry is constituted largely of those prompted by these inferior motives, that it has assumed that professional, secular air so extensively characteristic of it in our times.

3. That it so arrange as to require, by the very terms of admission in the very outset, a full decision to be thoroughly consecrated to the work of the ministry.

When men are required, in order to get into the ministry, to make such a decision as this, and thus come into the sacred office with their determinations fully formed to assume the whole of their responsibilities, in this very act every thing is implied necessary to settle the question of their future faithfulness. In this act, whatever of struggle was involved, has been made and overcome—whatever of indecision and reluctance was felt, has been triumphed over, and the mind is now settled and established. Such an act of decision, required to be made in the outset, has peculiar value. It implies that the whole future field has been surveyed, and that the determination to assume the responsibility which the step involves, is in view of it all—that the whole cost has been counted and is clearly understood. It implies the preclusion of all those chances of defeat which inconsiderateness in the outset and vagueness of aim might entail; and it implies a full and complete conscious triumph, in the beginning, over all obstacles—without which, in any moral enterprise, there is rarely seen entire stability and entireness of consecration.

Let these conditions be fulfilled in the formation of a

ministry, and right views and principles will be apt to control in all their future operations.

But we hold that the mode of admission, as now provided in the Methodist Church, is not competent to realize these conditions. First, because it is too accommodating a mode, subjecting the applicant to no test by which to try the motives, but making the terms so easy and complying as to draw in almost necessarily such as are without the true qualifications, as at all events, to make an insufficiency of right motives no barrier to admission. Secondly, because so far from being in itself an unyielding rule, demanding in all a certain standard of sincerity and fitness, it itself, at least in its associated influences, often becomes an instrumentality to urge men into the sacred office, laying aside its function of judge, and assuming that of importuner and advocate, and at best is virtually without power for actual resistance. It is a mode, the effect of which is to give license, not to determine or fix conditions. Indeed, so far from having an independent character, requiring those who desire admission themselves to be the seekers of it, uninfluenced by its own agencies and subjecting them to such tests as imply, in those who pass, certain definite and positive qualifications, it itself, in effect, is rather the inviter of applicants, with almost a promise, to all who knock, it shall be opened. It is arranged rather to furnish facilities, to encourage and to persuade, than to afford tests. In a day when to be a minister involved discredit and hazard, such a mode would be well adapted. In the early days of Methodism it was suitable; but in this day, when so many inferior motives conspire to urge men into the sacred office, under such a mode of admission it is not surprising, that so many are to be found in it who come short of its great and solemn trusts.

There is a mode, however, that might be provided, which would contribute much to realize these conditions. Let there

be a licensing Committee, to be constituted either in whole of travelling preachers, or equally of travelling and local preachers, appointed by the Bishop, and meeting at the same place with the Annual Conference, either synchronously or a few days previous, before whom, instead of the Quarterly Conference, all applicants for the ministry shall come. Let this Committee require the presence of applicants in person, in all cases, except when providentially detained, and subject them to such examination as may be prescribed to ascertain their gifts and graces, and then, by majority vote, determine their admission or rejection. Some of these details it might be found best, on thorough examination, to vary. As to these we are not tenacious. It is to those general features of the plan, — committing the licensing function within the limits of each Annual Conference to the jurisdiction of one central judicatory, and before whom all candidates shall appear in person, that we, in this connection, particularly refer.

This system will tend, in two ways, to realize the first condition stated as necessary to a right ministry.

I. It will take the licensing authority out of all those local influences which now so much bias the Quarterly Conferences, and place it where it can act independently, and with reference only to the strict merits of the case. Those men, therefore, who were intended to be nothing more than good exhorters, class-leaders, or Sunday-school teachers, but who, under the present system, because of the social influences brought to bear to further their admission, are made preachers, would never get admission into the ministry, but would continue in their own appropriate sphere of action. All that class, therefore, who depend upon extraneous influences to get them into the ministry, would, under this system, which affords no such auxiliaries, be left out.

II. This system, in throwing the burden of the application for the sacred office upon him personally who seeks it, and in

requiring positive personal effort, and often sacrifice, to appear before the licensing body, and a submission to an embarrassing process of examination when before it, places in the way of access to the ministry difficulties and embarrassments, that are well calculated to forestall and prevent all disqualified, improper persons from making application for the sacred office. The dignified character of the body, too, before whom they are to come, and the elevation thereby given to the whole licensing process, powerfully tend to repress all sinister desire to seek the ministry—indeed, to place the office above all unauthorized, counterfeit aspirations.

For the same reasons, this system will greatly contribute to restrict the applicants to that class alone who are prompted by a distinct consciousness of a divine call to the ministry. When the difficulties are but slight, and men have but little to test their self-denial and devotion, they may go into the ministry from inferior motives, but when those difficulties are accumulated, as is the case when they must leave their homes and go up to a distant point, and stand the test before a dignified and impartial tribunal, surrounded by all the solemnities with which the occasion and the importance of the objects are so well calculated to invest this process, they are not apt to take a step so marked and important, unless constrained by motives the most profound and pressing—by motives arising out of a sense of duty, out of a consciousness of a divine call to the work, which are unavoidable and irrepressible. There is something in the idea which would be generally entertained of the dignity of such a body, of the solemnity of such an occasion, and in the consciousness of the character of the work of the ministry, enhanced by the importance which, through this method of preparation, would be attached to it; that would effectually debar all from appearing before this body but such as felt themselves urged by a call from heaven that could not be resisted. The effect of this system,

therefore, would be to restrict all applicants for the sacred office, not only to those who are called of God to it, but to those who are prompted alone by a distinct and positive consciousness of that call.

Such being the difficulties in the way of the applicant in the outset, they are not apt to be successfully encountered as long as there is any indecision of purpose, as to a completeness of consecration to the work in future. Indeed, it is difficult to conceive, that any motive could be sufficiently strong to carry one successfully over these preliminary obstacles, which did not imply that a full survey of the whole future field had been made, and the decision formed of an unconditional dedication to it. It would be the effect, therefore, of this system, to subject the purposes of those who apply for admission into the ministry, to such test, as that none will go into it who have not in the outset fully considered the responsibilities which the office involves, and have resolved for life to meet them fully and unreservedly.

It follows, therefore, that so far as it is in the power of organization to secure a right ministry—a ministry controlled by those views and feelings that should be paramount—by any conditions which it should fulfill in the mode of admission—this system is fully calculated to subserve the desired end, tending as it does to present the most effective guards against the intrusion of the disqualified, to bring in those only who are prompted by a consciousness of a divine call, and to produce in the very outset those motives, the most important to secure the highest activity and fullest consecration, in their future course.

It is its excellence and glory, that it makes faith, and zeal, and self-devotion, the qualities we hold to be paramount in the ministry, all the time the test; and, by the prominence thus given to them in the outset, contributes to secure to us a ministry in which these are predominant and controlling.

The objections to this system, that the personal sacrifices demanded will effectually repel many who ought to become ministers, and that the pecuniary expense required is too much to expect, at least of many whose duty it would be to apply, are more specious than solid. These difficulties will never keep those out of the ministry who are impelled by those strong motives, without which they ought not to be in it. Those of insufficient motive they will repel, it is true, but such as are prompted by genuine motives, in right degree, will not fail successfully to encounter them. They are formidable, it is admitted; but it is their excellence, that while they are not too much so to exclude those of right principles and aims, they are sufficiently so to imply, that all those who do overcome them, have none other than the genuine impulses and characteristics of a true ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. And if itinerant ministers can submit to the pecuniary expense, annually, to attend the sessions of their Conferences, surely men, to obtain license to enter upon a career so important to them, and to which God has called them, can hardly regard it unjust or impracticable to submit to the same, once in a life-time. Men are not apt properly to estimate that which they obtain without trouble and expense, and these various acts of self-denial and exertion, in the outset of a career so important, are not without value, in their influence upon the prevailing view entertained of it.

It is an important consideration, in favor of this method of licensing, that its effect will be greatly to improve the general character of the local ministry.

While it must be admitted, that there are many good, and faithful, and highly useful men to be found in the ranks of the local ministry, (and we design this class to be wholly excepted in the remarks now to be made,) and that the local preacher system, if it could be restricted to such only, would be capable of highly useful employment, yet all who study

the history of the Church must see that, as respects the largest class who compose this department of the ministry, it is working most mischievously in the operations of Methodism.

Constituted, as this largest class is, under the present easy, inviting method of access into the ministry, of those who assume this office, not as the great business of life, but as a business merely secondary and incidental to other more engrossing employments, it is hardly to be expected, even if their circumstances were most favorable, that the office in their hands would be used very faithfully or usefully. But when we consider the secular entanglements to which they are liable, and the fact that they are left to themselves without restraint—there being no system actually enforced by superior authority, specifying their work, and holding them to its faithful performance—it is by no means surprising, that the ranks of the local ministry should exhibit so much inactivity and inefficiency.

But in so far as this system is constituted of this class, it is productive of positive evils, that are growing in their magnitude, and which, if not arrested, will work increasing damage to the interests of the Church. First: It constitutes a constant drain upon the active forces of the Church—a pit, in which men, who would be useful otherwise in the various subordinate stations of the Church, are effectually buried, laid aside, to render no more efficient service in the vineyard of the Lord. Secondly: It lowers the standard of the ministry, and the general estimate which is had of it, injuring thereby the usefulness of the better class of ministers, and discrediting the cause of Christianity itself. These evils would not be felt so decidedly, if this class were restricted to a few, scattered in distant localities; but embracing, as it does, so many, especially in certain communities, under the present system, so well adapted as a hot-bed process, to force the manufactory of preachers, they impress themselves upon the

interests of the Church to such a degree, as to become matter of serious alarm.

Nor are these all the evils inflicted by this system, through this class. Possessed of the ministerial office, yet without the authority and many of the privileges enjoyed by the travelling preachers, they become dissatisfied and restless with their inferior position, and feelings of jealousy are awakened. From this state of things, especially in those communities where they are sufficiently numerous to allow the encouragement of mutual sympathy and combination, two results follow: First, a spirit of antagonism to the regular itinerant ministry, manifesting itself in exceeding sensitiveness to all imagined neglect and indifference — in the failure heartily to coöperate in their plans — and in secret efforts to injure their position and enfeeble their influence. Second, a revolutionary spirit, which exhibits itself by the practice of frequently inveighing, secretly or publicly, against certain features of the Church organization, and of using the errors or failures of Church authorities to sow the seeds of discontent and revolution.

There has never been a radical movement in the Methodist Church which either did not have its origin in, or was not mainly supported by, disaffected local ministers of this class. And as long as this class exists, which it is likely will be the case, to an increasing extent, under the present method of access to the ministry, so long will there exist in the local ranks, both the sources and the materials of insubordination and mischievous discontent — so long will there exist in the local preacher system, an element which can never be made to harmonize with the general system of the Church, but which will be both a clog to its operations and disorganizing in its effects.

Many minds have perceived these disastrous results, as flowing from the present condition of the local preacher

system, and have proposed various plans to obviate them. But they have all been futile, inasmuch as they have looked to the purification of the mere stream, when the fountain itself was corrupt — to a construction of an efficient system, when the very elements which were to compose it were themselves defective and impracticable. If men not really called of God, and in the very outset deficient in right motive, are allowed to get into the ministry, no system of regulation intended to apply to them afterwards, however judiciously devised, can secure to them the characteristics of a right ministry. The defect in the present system is in the mode of admission — in the failure rightly to guard the door of entrance. Could this be so arranged as to insure the exclusion of all but such as God owns and invests with right ministerial qualifications, then would this class of local preachers, now working so much harm, be for ever unknown, and the system itself, constituted of such men as now compose its better class, would be a valuable auxiliary to the forces of the Church. Such would be the operation of the licensing system we propose. Guarding as it does the door of the ministry, and allowing, as we have shown, admission only to those truly called and properly decided, when once adopted, no more of those who go to make up this inert and disaffected class would find admission, so that when the present race shall have passed away, the local ministry would exhibit a class of men constituted in whole, and not, as now, in part, of such only as were zealous, devoted workers in the vineyard of the Lord. In this simple process, a change in the licensing system, is to be found a remedy for all the difficulties connected with this local preacher question. Nothing else will ever reach them; but this strikes at their true source. Having no retroactive effect, and, consequently, not interfering with those now invested with the office, it avoids all the delicacies and entanglements of the question. Gra-

dually, and without violence or abruptness, it will itself, without the necessity of any additional provision, rectify all the evils and accomplish the work of purification, so that soon, almost before we are aware of it, the process will be completed, and our local ministry will stand forth, not as now, a mixed mass of heterogeneous elements, but a band of men, full of zeal, and devoted with a single eye to the great work of Christian usefulness.

But in a plan for securing a ministry of right qualities — a ministry of zeal, and energy, and self-denial, it is not enough to guard the door of admission, so as to allow none to enter but such as evince these qualities — it is not enough to see to it that all who start in this great work shall be those only of right qualifications. These provisions, it is true, are the most important, and will contribute more than all else to secure the right object. Inherently prone as all men are to relapses, and abounding as the world does in influences likely successfully to antagonize even the best of men, there is no assurance that a ministry, however pure and rightly prompted in the outset, will continue so, unless the policy adopted to govern them has a directly favorable bearing, in these respects.

Now, such a policy will involve two principles.

The first is, that the interests of the work shall always be held as paramount to individual convenience and pleasure. This, in fact, is the true principle. It is an elementary law of God's economy, that particulars must yield to generals — that the individual must be subordinated to the general good. The glory of God is staked upon the triumph of his kingdom, and the tenure of every station, in the scheme of God's aggressive forces, is a willingness to merge all personal considerations into the paramount object of promoting the common cause. No man, therefore, who does not consider himself as thus subordinate to the great work proper to the

ministry, can have such conceptions of its responsibilities, as is necessary to elicit and sustain the true motives which should actuate him. Saint Paul thus understood his calling, and thus did our early Methodist preachers understand theirs. They looked not to themselves primarily, or to their own personal convenience. The great object before them, was the glory of God and the good of souls; and all considerations of self yielded to the paramount interests of the cause of Christ. They counted all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus their Lord, for whom they suffered the loss of all things, and counted them but dung, that they might win Christ. Such a principle once abandoned, the ministry sinks into a mere profession—a mere mode of livelihood—in which the question becomes not, how much good can be done, but how may personal convenience be promoted, how may the interests of self be advanced; but when adhered to, then the feelings and aims of all merge into the one great object of the greatest good to men—personal interests are subjected to the higher considerations of the cause of Christ—the spirit of faith, of zeal, of disinterested love, of self-denying, self-sacrificing devotion reigns, and the ministry, controlled by the glorious, the heroic martyr-purpose of their Master, are, in their examples, a living demonstration of the divinity of their religion, and, in their labors, the real successors of the apostles, the genuine representatives of a true ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In the Methodist Church, it is in the examination of character, in the distribution of the appointments of the preachers, and in the kind and amount of the work required of them, that this principle is to be particularly applied. These are the points especially, at which it needs to be applied, in order to maintain its ascendancy in the operations of the ministry, and to keep alive those qualities in the ministry, which its

right ascendancy is so well calculated to educe and sustain. And these are the points, especially that of the distribution of the appointments, at which it must be applied, because, under the method of distribution growing out of the itinerant system of the Methodist Church, the failure clearly to recognize and to conform to this principle would necessarily be followed by a rise, throughout the entire ranks, of a spirit of mutual jealousy and dissatisfaction, which would inevitably result in the overthrow of our present system, and in consequences every way hurtful to the cause of God. . Methodist itinerancy can exist on no other principle. It is this which reconciles the preacher to his appointment, as just, and in the order of Providence; and it is this which nerves him to encounter its sacrifices and labors, when entered upon. Indeed, it is the corner-stone, the foundation principle of the whole Methodist system—so far as it affects its regular ministry, the true and only sheet-anchor of its safety.

But as important as is this principle to the safety of the itinerant system, as earnestly as it was maintained in all the early periods of Methodism, and as vital as it is to a rightly constituted and successful ministry, yet there are not wanting signs of the gradual decline of its influence, and of the corresponding rise of the opposite principle—the predominance of the idea of self, in the aims and movements of the ministry. This most unfortunate tendency is attributable to two causes.

First, the gradual relaxation of the Episcopal prerogative. In the days of Asbury and McKendree, when that prerogative was sufficiently strong to determine through itself the destiny of the preachers, and all felt subject to it, then none expected any thing else than that their personal claims would be held subordinate to the interests of the work; and with such views, they were fully consecrated to the one work, and content, while subject to that authority, to be used in any way that the interests of the

common cause might require. The decisions of the Bishop were regarded as the voice of Providence, and all felt satisfied to be held as far subject to the interests of the cause, as might seem in his godly judgment to be most fit. But the influence of the popular element in civil government, modifying the prevailing views of the just powers of the Bishop—as it has often, most deplorably, those entertained of authority in almost all other departments—has compelled a surrender of much of that prerogative. Private manœuvring, or at least interference, either through Presiding Elders or in person, has become an important agency in deciding cabinet issues, and, as a consequence, by virtue of the very constitution of human nature, private views and personal convenience are becoming important elements to be considered, in the distribution of the work of the ministry. It is easy to see, that in proportion as the power of the Bishops is diminished by its transfer to the preachers, to the same extent will selfish considerations determine the movements of the preachers, and the principle of supreme reference to the interests of the work be surrendered. The relaxation of Episcopal prerogative in the Methodist Church has been a great, and the continuance of it will prove a fatal, error. The ascendancy of this great principle, in the scheme of the ministry, of paramount regard for the common cause, and, by consequence, the existence itself of a true ministry, and, what is of vital importance, the itinerant system itself, all depend upon the retention of the Episcopal prerogative, in the exercise of the stationing function, in the whole of its original strength and fullness. This, then, is the most important function possible to the Episcopacy—indeed, the one so important, that every other end which it is possible for the Episcopacy to subservē must, if necessary, be sacrificed in order to maintain it. The policy, therefore, advocated by some, of an increase of Bishops, to afford the masses the benefit of their more frequent pastoral

visitations and pulpit ministrations, is a mistaken, and would prove, as we believe, a ruinous one. Its effect would be, to lessen the hold of the Bishops upon the reverence and profound respect of the ministry generally, and thereby to impair their prerogative in the exercise of the stationing power. For, in the first place, in proportion as the number is increased, the probabilities of bringing in unsuitable men, of making unfortunate selections, are increased : at all events, the standard of qualifications, as to many at least, is lowered. But the influence of Bishops is not dependent upon the office : the character of the office itself, on the contrary, is largely dependent upon the qualifications of those who are its incumbents. Again : there can be no doubt that the dignity of the Episcopal office, the reverence entertained for it, and the consequent influence of which it is capable, is largely dependent upon the fact of its limitation to a few. This would not be so, if this smallness of number involved a failure to meet everywhere the essential requirement of the office, that is, the exercise of the stationing authority, so that others, not holding the office, had to be substituted, and share, even temporarily, its authority. This alternative always tends to lower the dignity of the office. And the strength of the Episcopacy, therefore, ought, by all means, ever to be adequate to perform this essential work. It was to a large extent owing to this limitedness of number, in the days of Asbury and McKendree, that they were held in such profound respect by the entire Church, and were enabled to wield so vigorously the Episcopal prerogative. It is a fundamental principle of human nature, that the reverence it entertains for dignitaries, and its subjection to their authority, depends very greatly upon the opportunities given for the exercise of the imagination, by the remoteness and rareness of these objects claiming their respect and obedience. "Familiarity breeds contempt ;" and the very commonness of the office and of the officers impairs its

and their position and influence. It ought to be recognized as a vital truth, that whatever is gained for diffusion in the Episcopacy, beyond the limit absolutely required for the stationing function, is lost to power and prerogative. Moreover, this depreciation of Episcopal standing and influence—the consequence of the multiplication of their number—will diminish correspondingly the effect, as judged of from the present capabilities of the Bishops in this respect, of that general intercourse and effort among the people, for which it is the object of that multiplication to provide. So that the very method adopted to secure to the masses benefit from Episcopal intercourse, has embraced in it the element of its own certain defeat—the very conditions by which that intercourse is secured being precisely those which render it, as to the peculiar advantages of it contemplated, wholly inefficient and nugatory. The Bishops of the Church ought, as far as opportunity will allow, to circulate among the people, and to use industriously and zealously the advantages of their position to do good among them; but it is an unwise policy to create Bishops with specific and controlling reference to this result.

Secondly, the attempt to harmonize the living in a fixed home with itinerant operations—the result of a surrender of the idea of a general parsonage system. Except in a few cases, in which right purposes are still maintained in spite of a bad practice, the very step itself implies a superior reference to the interests of self, and the consequent abandonment of this higher principle; and if it does not, it is the unavoidable, the almost inevitable, effect of its working, finally to put those who take it in a position, in which they are compelled to make the interests of self paramount to the interests of the work, and thereby to forfeit the true spirit and practice of right ministers of the gospel of Christ. Necessarily, therefore, the ultimate effect of this *localizing* policy is to

place all who adopt it without the pale of this great governing principle of the ministry; and to its frequent adoption, therefore, is to be attributed, in great degree, the unfortunate decline of this principle, so perceptible in the movements of our modern ministry.

The second principle involved in a policy framed to perpetuate purity and right motive in the ministry, is that of low salaries. There can be no doubt, that it is an obligation most imperative upon the Church that her ministry should be supported; but it is a great mistake to suppose that it is either just or expedient, that the amount of it should be on that enlarged and highly liberal scale sometimes common in other Churches, and which is the standard clamored for by some in the Methodist Church. The economy of Methodism, its friends claim to be providential in its arrangement; and if there is any feature of it more so than another, and which has contributed more than any other to the purity and energy of her ministers, it is that of the principle of low salaries, with which it originally set out. We deny not that the principle may have been carried too far, and that therefore incidentally evil has resulted. We deny not that even now, in some quarters and in reference to some individuals, from a contracted, niggardly spirit, it is pushed to an extreme from which serious disadvantage has followed. We mean to say that the principle in itself is a safe and valuable one, and that its effect in the Methodist Church has been highly conservative and useful.

We hold the true rule to be, that the amount of salary is to be determined, not by an estimate of what men of like qualifications may be able to make in the secular employments of life, but of what is the least amount necessary comfortably to support men of like social standing. The ministerial calling should never be held as a lucrative employment, both because it is wrong to speculate on the liberality of the Church,

and because the requisition, by the Scriptures, upon the Church, is restricted to a support, and embraces nothing more. Men who have gone into the ministry are supposed, in the Divine economy, to be actuated by a high, disinterested motive of supreme love for the cause of God, and to have sacrificed all idea of worldly gain to the higher, more glorious object to which they are called, of winning souls to Christ. While, therefore, all ministers devoted exclusively to their peculiar work, should have a support from the Church—a support corresponding with their social position, because any thing less than this would possibly involve social depression and an impairment of usefulness, yet any thing more than this must be held as wrong in principle. Indeed, any thing more than this—to make the ministry a vocation involving no rigid economy or self-denial in pecuniary matters, but, on the contrary, one of easy, abundant living, and, it may be, of actual money-saving, would be followed by the most unfavorable consequences. First, it would constitute a ground of strong enticement into it, from not only a wrong but a corrupt motive—an enticement which in this day, when the office of the minister involves so little of personal sacrifice, and confers so much respectability and favor, will not fail to be largely successful; and, secondly, a style of living and an effeminacy of character and habits incompatible with that spirit of self-denial and self-sacrifice, with that laboriousness and zeal, which ought to be inseparable from the minister anywhere, and which are indispensable to the occupancy of many fields of labor—indeed, to the maintenance of the itinerant system. Low salaries, therefore, are conservative of a pure, self-denying, laborious ministry. It is a remarkable fact in the history of the Church, that God calls but few of the wealthier class to the sacred office. Christ's apostles were taken from occupations which indicate their poverty. It is a fact which finds its explanation, doubtless, in this considera-

tion, that the feelings and habits which pecuniary abundance most generally superinduces, are incompatible with the maintenance of those qualities necessary to the highest efficiency and success, in this important vocation.

From this extended survey, it cannot fail to be evident, that the change in the mode of admission we have proposed, and an adherence to a policy governing the ministry, characterized by the principles set forth, will almost certainly insure a ministry in whom the right qualities—the qualities of faith, of zeal, and self-denying faithfulness—are ever paramount. Then shall we have a ministry ready to encounter any risk, to submit to any sacrifice, which an unfaltering prosecution of their high calling, under any circumstances, may demand—a ministry disciplined to toil and labor, and who expect nothing else than to endure hardship, and to be industriously, zealously, self-denyingly devoted to the sacred interests of their vocation—a ministry full of zeal in behalf of their Master's interests and of the disinterested love of souls; and who, not satisfied with that amount of performance which answers to screen them from public censure, (the limit very generally, in this day, of ministerial labor,) are themselves ever on the alert to discover every practicable mode of usefulness, and, self-impelled, spontaneously enter upon every enterprise, upon every course of action, that promises good to men.

Indeed, with such a ministry, we hardly need any thing more to insure the ultimate development of every ministerial function. The right use of the pulpit, as it respects both its topics and their mode of presentation, the full employment of the pastoral function, and the occupancy of that wide sphere of duty appropriate to the ministry, and indispensable, as we have shown, to the full development of the various functions of the Church—all will in the end inevitably follow.

It is a ministry with these qualities in the ascendant, which is, in fact, the end to be aimed at, in all efforts to bring out

fully the ministerial function. This obtained, all else will follow necessary to completeness, whether of ministerial qualification or of ministerial operation.

Nor will the system we propose, so stringent as to secure and maintain these qualities, and restricting ministers as a class to those alone who possess them, necessarily, as some might suppose, especially in view of the constantly enlarging field for enterprise, reduce the ministry to an inadequate number. On the contrary, we maintain that it is the absence of such a system, and the consequent lowness of the ministerial standard, in respect of these high qualities, which accounts for the present lack of laborers so often deplored. Let this high standard be adopted, and the class of our ministry be confined to those actuated by these noble principles and aims, and then, with God's own conditions fulfilled, and the Church constantly abounding and alive with all those fruits of piety, and zeal, and enterprise, which could not fail to ripen from the labors of those thus actuated, that divine Head who is ever so watchful and careful of the interests of his Church, would be free to take care of and manage this interest in his own way, and hence would see to it that there should be laborers, not only in sufficiency, but more abundant, more efficient and successful, than now or in all the past.

The proper development of the ministerial function thus elaborately set forth, implying as it does the entire abandonment by the ministry, and especially the itinerant ministry, of all secular employment, of all methods of worldly gain, and a full, unqualified consecration to their own great work, necessarily cuts them off from all privilege of providing, by their own direct agency, for wants absolutely essential to their nature. For as subject both in themselves and in their families to the conditions common to humanity, they, of course, have wants which nothing but earthly resources can supply. But the economy of God is ever consistent, and consequently

He has seen to it that, while calling the ministry to this exclusively spiritual vocation, these temporal wants shall themselves be provided for, by devolving the duty of their supply upon the Church, whose interests they serve. Hence, it is a fixed fact, in the system of God's arrangement, that correspondingly with the imperativeness of the obligation upon the preacher, to devote himself exclusively to his one work, is that of the correlative obligation upon the Church, to furnish that supply of his wants by which such devotion is rendered practicable.

There is peculiar wisdom in such an arrangement. First: It implies a division of labor, of peculiar fitness and efficiency, each party doing that portion of the work to which its qualifications and circumstances best adapt it. Secondly: Consecrated, as the preacher exclusively is, under the noblest, most disinterested impulses, to these the highest interests of man, it is but right, it is but just, that whatever is necessary to meet wants, the chances for a suitable provision of which are thus abandoned by him in such consecration, shall be supplied by the Church. Thirdly: Such an arrangement, identifying the Church with the preacher, constituting her part and parcel of a system of agency of which he is the centre, is wisely adapted to secure her sympathy and coöperation in the furtherance of the great designs to which he is devoted. "The laborer," saith the Scriptures, "is worthy of his hire." And, again, "even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel."

But what now, in detail, are those wants of the preacher which it is incumbent upon the Church to supply?

1. A home. Of course the preacher must have a home, and a home being obtained only by secular resources, all seeking of which he has abandoned, it is the duty of the Church to provide it for him. The parsonage system we regard the best the Church can adopt, as providing for this

want. This insures a home for the preacher at all times, and avoids the perplexity and uncertainty consequent upon the necessity of procuring one every year. This allows of a certainty in the suitability of the location of the preacher's home at all times, which could hardly be expected under a system which compels new arrangements annually. This allows the constant suitable furniture of the preacher's home, without which the arrangements of the church procuring a home are incomplete; but which is impracticable under a system changing the house of the preacher periodically. The working of the parsonage system, on those circuits and stations where it has been properly tried, proves both its practicability and its excellence. There is no self-sustaining circuit or station which is unable to provide a comfortable and well-furnished parsonage. It is one of the evils of the *localizing* policy of our itinerants, that it has tended to discourage this system: indeed, that it has effectually defeated it as the one of universal prevalence. If this policy could be abandoned, and the parsonage system everywhere be insisted and relied upon, our preachers would soon find everywhere well-provided homes, by which their own convenience and comfort and usefulness would be greatly promoted; for we can but believe that the Church, if trusted in this matter, as in all others relating to their physical wants, would not fail, in this enlightened day, soon to prove herself worthy of the confidence reposed. While, however, the preachers are divided in their policy in this matter, no system of free homes can be expected universally to prevail. The adoption of some plan, compelling the preacher to occupy the parsonage, wherever one is provided, would tend much to remove the discouragements to this system, and to its continuance where it has been adopted.

2. A comfortable support. The rule by which the amount for this purpose is to be determined has already been stated.

But whatever is the true amount ought of course to be provided; for the preacher has the wants common to humanity, and it is the duty of the Church to supply these wants. Three things ought to be regarded in the provision of the preacher's salary. First: that it be as near as possible uniform, in all the various fields of labor, as to the principles which determine the amount. Fluctuation in amounts, different years, maintains in the preacher's mind a degree of suspense and uncertainty which precludes all reliance upon calculations of the future, and gives rise to the necessity of constant variation in his habits and style of living, unfavorable to his own comfort and the well-being of his family. Secondly: that the collections of salary be made with some regularity, as to the periods of the year, avoiding that uncertainty and confusion, in this respect, so often in conflict with the convenience and the best interests of the preacher. Thirdly: that the preacher himself be wholly disconnected, by settled arrangement, from the whole subject of the finances, as they refer to his own salary, and relieved thereby from the necessity of becoming a party in the plan providing for himself, so annoying and painful to minds of proper delicacy and refinement.

3. The education of his children. Now, we hold that whatever of pecuniary means the preacher needs to discharge obligations inseparable from his actual relations, ought to be supplied by the Church. The ground of this general obligation is the same with that of the obligation to support his family, which is, that his abandonment of the ordinary means of gain, for the sake of devoting himself to these highest interests of men, ought not to be allowed by those thus served to involve the loss of such gain, as far as it is necessary to enable him to discharge his own actual obligations. Now, that the preacher ought to educate his children is evident, not only from all those considerations imposing such a duty

upon parents, which apply to him as to all others, but for other reasons. Neglect in this particular, and that ignorance and loss of respectability, if not demoralization, in respect of his children, apt to result from it, reflects unfavorably upon the preacher himself, and affects injuriously his capacity for usefulness. Besides, as the professed friend of education, as an enterprise to which society everywhere is urged, he is expected to lead the way, as far as practicable, in his own example, and to give such proofs of his own sincerity, in the advocacy of it, as are afforded in efforts to educate his own children. It follows, therefore, that the education of the preacher's children is a duty incumbent upon him, and, as such, that it is the duty of the Church to furnish the pecuniary facilities necessary to this end. This obligation, thus devolved upon the Church, by virtue of her relation to her ministers, is enforced by the additional considerations that, in its discharge, other important ends are subserved, *viz.*, the expansion of the zeal, the liberality, and the disinterestedness of the Church, which are important results in her proper development; and the increase of the number of the educated under the auspices of the Church, or Christian influence, which, as we have seen, is a valuable means for the augmentation of the resources and the efficiency of the Church, showing that, in the economy of God, there is a mutual connexion and harmony between all duties, whereby the performance of one is enforced by all the advantages which result from the performance of others.

There are two methods by which the Church may fulfil this obligation. 1st, by means of a general fund, contributed with specific reference to this object — the method already adopted in some of the Conferences; and, 2d, by an increase of the salary of those who have children, with the view to meet the expense of their liberal education. Both methods might, and perhaps ought to be combined, but the latter we would chiefly

rely upon, as being less complicated, and capable of extension to a greater number, and because it makes the parent himself the almoner—a method more in harmony with nature, and better calculated to perpetuate in offspring right filial sentiments.

4. Those little conveniences and facilities and attentions, which are to be supplied rather by acts of good neighborhood, and of spontaneous, vigilant kindness, than by any regular system of arrangement seeking to provide them in advance. Changing as the home of the preacher is, he is denied the privilege, even if he were pecuniarily able, of accumulating around him whatever may be necessary to his own and family's comfort, in all circumstances, but in this respect is largely dependent and helpless. Now, since these are disabilities consequent upon a life of consecration, having a direct bearing upon the Church's welfare, it is but just that she should be not only on the alert to anticipate and to discover them, but to contribute her agency kindly and freely to relieve them. Aside from the relief and sense of security, a bearing like this on the part of the Church toward her preachers, so full of sympathy and kindness, is certain to afford, and of its tendency to cherish, in the Church herself, some of the finest elements of elevated Christian piety: it imparts to the preachers themselves a degree of strength and encouragement well calculated to animate and sustain them in their labors of love, of zeal, and of self-sacrificing devotion.

Thus provided, amply and fully, with all that is required to meet their own wants, and to enable them to fulfill any obligations that may arise out of their actual relations, the ministry, unhindered and free, can devote themselves, without reserve, to their own specific work—to the faithful prosecution of every function appropriate to their exalted office.

SECTION VII.

THE SPIRITUAL FUNCTION

THE great end of the gospel—that for which it was provided—is the achievement of supernatural, or, more properly, spiritual results in the experience of the children of men. And it is because of this fact, and of the peculiar nature of all that preliminary work preparatory to and promotive of these results, that the accompaniment of the divine sanction, and of the divine influence, is the essential condition to the efficacy and success of all Christian agency. Church organization, and all that combination of means for furthering the objects of the gospel, whether employed by the Church in her associate capacity, or by individuals on their own responsibility, are nothing more than a mere system of machinery, through which divine influence exerts itself to produce its own results, and which, unless operated by this influence, is wholly inefficient as to the peculiar and specific objects of the gospel. It is the element of spiritual power—of divine agency, directly and efficiently exerted, that overcomes the difficulties to the progress of the gospel, and that actually achieves that progress: all else are mere modes—a mere combination of media, through which that agency is communicated—the appointed conditions of its realization. The Church, therefore, or, more properly, the forces of the Church, when rightly constituted, have a spiritual function blending with and pervading each and all its other functions, the recognition and exercise of which is indispensable to their efficiency and success. And so entire is this dependence upon

the divine agency for all that is valuable and saving in Christianity, that Church history reveals no fact more clearly than that the power and purity and evangelical progress of the Church, as well as the signal excellence of Christian example in individual cases, have been precisely in the ratio in which this element was recognized, and the conditions for its attainment were fulfilled.

The early Church herself, the witness of the doings of our Saviour while on earth, of the acts of the Apostles, and of the wonderful results on the day of Pentecost—herself instructed by and associated with teachers divinely inspired, and herself, amidst the persecutions and trials to which she was subjected, the object of sustaining and guiding grace that could only be attributed to that divine interposition which had been so recently promised her—was in the very outset fully imbued with this great principle, and sought to maintain a conscious dependence upon it in all her operations. Hence the glorious success of her early struggles—a success which would have been perpetuated with accumulating glory, and a speed constantly accelerated, ushering in, ere this perhaps, the happy era of universal evangelization, had this primitive, scriptural view of the economy of God been maintained. Unfortunately, however, man's nature is repugnant to that submissiveness which this principle, attributing to God all the glory, implies; but prefers to attribute to God less, by arrogating to himself more, and hence, when, by virtue of this very principle of divine interposition, the Christian Church had assumed a position secure from persecution and dread, at that period other views were allowed to supplant it, and her spiritual function, no longer recognized, was abandoned and lost. And ever since that day, excepting a protracted period when the powers of darkness, having well-nigh completely triumphed, had well-nigh universally shut out all idea of God, as an element of direct influence in Christian operations, and

all was one continuous scene of moral night, the history of the Church has exhibited a constant struggle—a struggle, in fact, that has governed that history—having in view, on the one side, the recognition and ascendancy of this great element, and, on the other, its overthrow and perpetual banishment. And in so far as this antagonist party in this struggle has been successful, and this great doctrine of immediate divine agency has been held in abeyance or forgotten, nothing has been more evident than that, while there may have been advancement in the spread of Church organization and the subjection of people to its sway, it was an advancement rather nominal than real—an advancement in dominion over the superstition, or the fears, or, as in many cases, the mere physical nature of man, rather than in those results which involve the true objects of the gospel, the elevation and the final salvation of the human race.

Though this constant struggle to exclude this sense of dependence upon spiritual agency, which constitutes her spiritual function, is, after all, traceable to the same fundamental cause, the enmity of the human heart to divine control, yet the precise forms which it has assumed and exhibited have varied in different periods, according to the degree of progress and the relative condition of the individual man.

The first was by the substitution of the Church, or rather the authorities of the Church, in the place of God. It is easy to perceive that, in any state of things in which human authority is made to take the place of divine, so that men look for salvation to the former instead of the latter, the latter will of course be ignored and excluded. Prevailing as was the monarchical form of government in the earlier days of the Church, and trained as were the masses to subjection to the few, it is not difficult to perceive, not only how the rulers of the Church obtained a concession to themselves of prero-

gatives properly divine, but that a tendency in human nature to divest itself of this spiritual dependence and connection, existing at that period, this would be the most natural form which it would assume. It was that form whose development was the natural sequence of the condition of men, individually and socially, then existing.

But though it succeeded so far as totally to revolutionize the organization of the Church, setting man in the place of God, and, as it respects the functions of the Church, excluding all idea of divine communication or agency, and though this state of things continued so long as to shroud the world for a protracted period of centuries in well-nigh universal darkness, yet there were not wanting, even under these forbidding circumstances, and during this long night of moral gloom and desolation, those who earnestly protested against this abandonment of God. Huss and Wycliffe, and many others, whose names are without a place in history, manfully and heroically contended for the truth; and though they were crushed themselves by the surrounding forces of persecution and death, yet the light of their example and labors could never be extinguished, but continued on in brightening effulgence and in widening diffusion, until the Reformation by Martin Luther once more brought truth into the ascendancy, and restored this great principle to its rightful place in the system of the Church and in the faith of Christians. The Reformation of Luther was, indeed, nothing more than a protest against the abandonment of the spiritual function of the Church—a reproclamation of it, and a reëstablishment of it in the faith of individual Christians, and in the operations of the Christian system.

But while the Reformation, as to its legitimate effect, secured the freedom of the individual conscience from the thralldom of ecclesiastical despotism, and thereby a triumph over this tendency to exclude from the Church her spiritual

function, so far, at least, as it manifested itself by interposing the Church between man and God, yet the progress of events soon revealed that it had only obviated this form of manifestation to give place, if not so universally, yet to a wide extent, to another. Soon the idea of individualism—to which the doctrine of immediate communion with Divinity, mainly insisted on in the Reformation, had given so much prominence—this same tendency seized upon, and, pushing it to its extreme, erected the individual reason as the umpire to which the claims and the contents of the Christian Revelation were to be subjected, and rationalism became the prominent scheme by which the spiritual function of the Church was supplanted. And even where rationalism did not prevail, as the system consciously embraced, formalism, which was but a legitimate fruit of it, and which as effectually ignored the divine element in the functions of the Church, became to a large extent the characteristic state of the Christian Church.

It was after this vital principle of the gospel, which had been successfully reasserted in the Reformation by Luther, and had been for a while gloriously maintained, had become, under these new forms, almost as effectually suppressed as in the darkest of the middle ages, that Methodism arose. And as the Reformation was the revival and reproclamation of this great principle, after the long period of its utter exclusion, by hierarchial assumption, so Methodism was nothing more than the reaction of this same principle against the standard of the individual reason, or of ecclesiastical formalism, which were tending no less to its practical annihilation.

Methodism, therefore, was the second grand Reformation, having in view the same great object as the first—the restoration of the spiritual function of the Church—the reassertion and the reestablishment of the great doctrine of God in his gospel. Starting with this great motive, and with this as its basis, Methodism, in its original character, was nothing

but the simple gospel itself, reproclaimed and going forth to do the work of the gospel. Little and contemned, like the earlier Christian Church, it arose upon the strength of its spiritual function ; and, by the efficiency of that function alone, has not only triumphed over all persecution, and established itself in its own spiritual character, the vastest of evangelical denominations, but has thus far successfully met the claims of its great mission, of arresting the tide of rationalism and of formalism, against which it was originally arrayed, and, by challenging the attention of those great bodies which at first despised it, of becoming the mighty instrumentality of leading the entire Protestant world back to the great object of the Lutheran Reformation—to the great cardinal principle of the primitive Church, the hearty recognition of the spiritual element in the faith and system of the general Church.

But, though founded with the view to this great principle, and indebted alone for its triumphant success to its constant recognition, yet it must be confessed that even in Methodism the signs are not wanting, that that same tendency to ignore and exclude it, which so soon obscured the fair prospects of the early Church, and so soon threatened to undo the happy results of the Lutheran Reformation, has begun to manifest itself. Indeed, so obvious are they as to give some plausibility to the theory, that, in the great scheme of the Church, there are necessarily epochs of rise and decline, and that, while every system, however perfect and well guarded in the outset, must, by reason of the conditions of humanity, to which it is subject, be liable to deterioration and decline, the only ground of hope is, that, having their centre on the other side in God, and devised for his own purposes, there is always a power of reproductiveness which insures in the stead of those grown obsolete, others, which, coming into existence with fresher impulses, modified and arranged under all the lights

of the past, and in closer adaptation to existing conditions and circumstances, are more fully furnished for the great purposes of a gracious Providence. But we indulge no apprehension of the obsolescence of Methodism, in obedience to any such theory, although, as before intimated, there are not wanting indications of a decline of her hold upon this great principle, by virtue of which she has attained her present position of power and usefulness, and without which she must indeed grow weak and fall. These indications, it is true, are not of the gross and palpable character of those against which the Reformation was a revolt, or of those which Methodism in its origin was designed to supplant; for it will be observed, in respect of those forms of manifestation which this tendency to divest the Church of its spiritual function has assumed, that there has been, in each successive development, a gradual transition from the gross and palpable to the more refined and subtle—the result of a gradual progress in the Church in her conceptions of the divine economy, and a limitation of the liabilities of the Church, in this respect, to a field narrower and less obvious. Still, they are indications none the less significant: they are found in several facts—facts which, though they may not in every instance so universally prevail as to characterize the whole Church, yet sufficiently so in every case to exhibit active tendencies, marked directions, and to justify conclusions of general application.

The first we notice, is the tendency, becoming so common, to consider certain advantages of a purely worldly or human character as in themselves competent, absolutely and independently, to give success to the Christian cause. 1st. Those which result from a connection with the Church of the classes of wealth and high social position. In the earlier days of Methodism, when its membership was confined to the humbler ranks of society, there was but little temptation

to substitute these social forces in the place of immediate divine agency; but now, since these higher classes have been brought so numerous within its embrace, it cannot be disguised, that a tendency has become, by no means uncommon, to regard them as combining in themselves independently those advantages which are to insure the desired success to the interests of the Church. The charms which, in the estimation of men, always belong to wealth and high position, aided by the public sentiment, which many of these classes have themselves contributed to infuse, of their own importance, from the exaggerated estimate they place upon the immunities which distinguish them, together with the obvious fact of the advantages they do confer, when employed simply as means or instruments, are the ground upon which this tendency has been excited. But that it exists quite extensively, is evident to the observation of all who notice with any care the internal affairs of the Church. Among a variety of proofs, these may be stated as sufficient. First, the disposition, by no means rare, to modify the usages, and even the economy of the Church, to pander to and secure these classes. Secondly, the disposition, no less common, to relax the standard of the Church, that these may be secured or retained. Thirdly, the superior and special reference so habitually had to them, both in the plans of the Church itself, and in the movements of individual men. And, fourthly, the regard which is had for the advantages which the accession of these classes confer, and the conscious security and confidence imparted by them. But it of course follows, that, in the ratio in which these are thus confided in, as in themselves capable of securing the desired success in the operations of the Church, the divine element in Church agency is repudiated — both because they are to that extent substitutes for that element, and because, from the very nature of that kind of success which they thus absolutely

and of themselves are capable of achieving, the character of the progress looked to in the affairs of the Church, is such as is purely worldly, and wholly without that element.

2d. Those which are derived from the purely intellectual element of the ministry. That there is a tendency, even in the Methodist Church, to substitute talent in the ministry in the place of the divine agency, and thus to supplant it, is seen in these facts: the reliance placed upon it as indispensable to success in revivals — the disposition to overlook and even to slight those who have no special claims to it, however distinguished for piety, for zeal, and for successful labors — the belief, quite common, that the logical enforcement and eloquent expression of truth alone will secure to it success — and, lastly, the disposition, by means of theological seminaries, and other favorite schemes of ministerial improvement, to change that earlier standard of Methodism, which makes spiritual qualifications the test, and to adopt one which makes qualifications pertaining more especially to the intellect paramount.

It is not denied that all these advantages, whether of social force or of ministerial talent, are important, and, indeed, indispensable, when regarded as subordinate to and the mere instruments of divine agency, and capable of the desired success only as they are immediately sanctioned and attended by that agency: it is only as they are regarded as more than means, and are erected into agencies capable in themselves of successful achievement, with powers and functions ascribed to them that ought to be referred to God himself, that we consider them as objectionable, and as indicating a decline in the Church, in her appreciation and use of her spiritual function.

Another fact we notice, as indicating a want of right appreciation in the Church of the Divine element in its operations, is the disposition to subject the displays of God's

power, in signal and special blessings to men, to certain false conditions, as, for example, to certain periods of the year, and the occurrence of special preparatory provisions and arrangements. How common is the opinion—so common, in fact, as to constitute a fixed peculiarity of the prevailing faith—that it is only in certain seasons of the year, and when special and suitable external arrangements are made for it, that the economy of God seems to allow him to manifest himself signally gracious to men. Now, a right conception of the relations of God to the system of means which he has devised for the progress of his cause, would limit these manifestations of his power by no such restrictions, but would feel that, so far as the economy which governs his actions is concerned, it allows of the same free interposition of himself at all times and everywhere. Such a conception of God's economy, we suppose, the early Methodist preachers had, and hence that they labored not only under the firm conviction that the divine agency could be exerted through them at all times, and that revival influences might attend their labors at all seasons and everywhere, but that the accompaniment and exertion of that agency, being dependent upon faith and zeal, rather than the external combinations of human arrangement, there was no need to wait an array of preparation and preliminary adjustment, but that, single-handed and alone, anywhere and under all circumstances, it was competent to expect any measure of the divine manifestation and of the divine blessing. It follows, then, that this limitation to which the manifestation of the divine element in Christian operations is subjected, implies, to that extent, a failure rightly to appreciate that element, and an actual limitation of the spiritual function of the Church.

The next fact we notice, as indicating this tendency, is the prevailing notion of splendid church edifices—of pews and

organs in churches. It is impossible to conceive of any ground for this notion which does not involve, in some way, either a repudiation or a misconception of the spiritual element in Christianity, either as a principle of agency or a principle of individual experience. So far as these instrumentalities are relied upon, as a method of attracting men into Church-fellowship, by pleasing the senses, by gratifying their mere tastes or love of display, they, of course, imply a discredit of the divine element as the agency by which the cause of Christianity is to be advanced. So far as they are relied upon, as a practical method for marking a line of demarcation between the higher and lower classes, of alienating the latter that thereby the former may be allowed in a more exclusive, united manner to conduct, in their own way, the exercises of religion, in addition to their contravention in this effect of the great law of Christianity, that the "poor have the gospel preached to them," the favorable opinion of them shows a misconception of the genius of Christianity, of its great spiritual aims and objects, that no less discredits and disregards this divine element. So far as they indicate a desire to have, and do have, the effect to give more formality to religious worship, and indicate a reliance upon those agencies which charm and gratify the senses, as the means of finding interest and entertainment in religious worship, they imply—in this total want of conception of the spiritual character and aims of that worship—an entire neglect or repudiation of what constitutes the divine element in the energies and experiences of Christianity. "God is a spirit, and they that worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth." And, finally, so far as either or all of these objects are designed as helps to worship—to quicken the sensibilities—to animate attention—to inspire emotion—or in any way to hold the mind or the feelings to the exercises of Christianity, they, in that design, not only imply an abandonment

of the true and only source of that help appropriate in all these respects, the divine agency, but an actual provision for that abandonment. Now, if there be any motive other than those thus stated which has prompted, or could be supposed to prompt, the desire among Methodists to adopt this materialistic system, or rather this paraphernalia system, we confess our inability to conceive of it; and yet, in respect of every one of these, it is evident that they involve either a repudiation or a misconception of the spiritual element of Christianity, and, consequently, indicate, as far at least as they are concerned who experience them, a decline in the appreciation of the Church's spiritual function.

This paraphernalia system is the favorite one of all those Churches which, rejecting the spiritual element of Christianity, seek the employment of material media, of external agencies, to enslave the imagination, and to give interest to the otherwise monotonous exercises of religious worship. In the absence of these higher resources for success and interest, it is natural to turn to these as the only substitutes. In whatever Church fellowship, therefore, the tendency to this system manifests itself, it is but a rational conjecture that the motives which prompt it have their origin in loose, if not in wholly inadequate conceptions of the spiritual character of the Christian system.

The rationalistic spirit abroad in the Church, is another indication of a decline in Methodism of its recognition of the divine element in Church operations. There are two attitudes which the human mind may assume to the teachings of Revelation. It may, prompted by the spirit of faith, place itself in a submissive attitude, and, as consciously inferior, subject itself to their authority; or it may, in a spirit of self-confidence, assume the attitude of a superior, and thus subject their authority to its own. Now, it is only when in the first of these attitudes, that the human mind will ever become

adequately impressed with the supernatural or spiritual aspects of Christianity; for when in the other, holding as it does the teachings of Christianity as subject to its own operations, of course only so much of them will be recognized and admitted as fall within its range, and consequently the supernatural must be rejected. It may be remarked, that the mind of man, when active in relation to Christianity, must be in one or the other of these attitudes, and that from this fact, two conclusions are deducible: first, that this long struggle between the spiritual element of Christianity, and that tendency of constant manifestation to repudiate it, so far at least as it has been a contest of reason, has turned at last upon the mere fact of the position which the intellect has assumed in reference to Christianity, in respect of the mere matter of relative superiority; and, secondly, that the foundation principle of every form which the rejection of spiritual Christianity has assumed, from that of simple rationalism or formalism, to that of downright avowed infidelity, is essentially one and the same. Now, the Wesleyan mind, in an eminent degree controlled by the spirit of humility, of reverence, and faith, though within its own proper range active and discriminating, is characterized by the steadfastness with which it maintains this submissive attitude to the entire contents of the Christian Revelation; and hence the marked earnestness and emphasis with which Methodism, especially in all her earlier periods, has recognized and upheld all that belongs to the spiritual element of the Christian system. There are indications, however, in more recent times, of a transition to the other attitude, and of the rise, consequently, of a rationalistic spirit within her limits—a spirit, as we have seen, utterly incompatible with adequate views of this element. These indications are to be found as yet, it is true, rather in the modes and tendencies of thought, in the tone and spirit of the thinking mind, than in any actual developments of a positive, tangible

form. Still, in the manner in which the great subjects of Providence, of the higher forms of Christian experience, of the higher departments of Christian self-denial, have been attempted to be grappled and handled of late, and the loose views on all these subjects which, under this attempt to subject these mighty themes to the crucible of human reason, are beginning to prevail, already furnish us positive evidences, not only of this new attitude which Methodist mind is beginning to assume, and of the rationalistic spirit following, but of what may be expected, as to the continuance of the spiritual function of the Church, when this transition shall have become more marked and complete.

There are two principal causes of this change of attitude now going on in Methodist mind, and of the consequent rise of this spirit. It is an unfortunate effect of our free institutions, that the personal independence they secure, educates the people to an excessive sense of mental independence, the manifestations of which are an aversion to all authority in the world of mind—a spirit of irreverence for all that is time-honored and settled—an exclusive concentration upon ideas new and of the present—and an overweening self-sufficiency in all that pertains to reason and judgment. Such being the characteristic traits of the American mind, generally, it is natural that they should manifest themselves no less in the attitude which it assumes in respect of the great matters of religion. Again : under this general freedom from fear and restraint, secured by our free institutions, the whole process of mental training in our country—the independent, self-sufficient manner to which the general mind is invited and encouraged in all the matters of science and criticism—the habits of lawlessness, and too often of recklessness, to which it is trained in its investigations, and which are very generally held as virtues—the constancy with which each and all, as independent sovereigns, are called to sit in judgment upon

every variety of subject, in all departments of knowledge—all tend to secure to the mind that character of discipline from which this independent attitude in the matters of Christianity, as in all else, is inevitable.

But if, as from this presentation of facts it seems evident, there is a decline in the Church in its appreciation and recognition of its spiritual element, the important question is, What are the conditions, the fulfilment of which, will bring her back to her right position in reference to this vital subject, and secure to her the right elicitation and use of her spiritual capabilities?

The first we notice, as indispensable, is a right ministry.

The ministry in themselves, and in the agency they are the direct means of employing, constitute, in Methodism, the largest-portion of the instrumentality in use for the progress of Christianity. Of course, therefore, if they could have right views and spirit in respect of this subject, so far as that in them, as an instrumentality, the divine element should be brought to bear, in all its intended application and force, most of what constitutes the spiritual function of the Church would be realized. But such a ministry would not only secure the development of this Divine agency in themselves: their example, their spirit, the fruits of their own earnestness and zeal, the peculiar themes of their ministry, and the modes of their presentation, so different from the cold speculations, the stale, lifeless style and subjects of the modern pulpit, would all powerfully contribute to the elicitation of right views and faith, as to this subject, in the entire mass of the Church. It is an additional consideration, therefore, in favor of the right improvement of the ministry, that this important specific result would follow.

The second grand condition is a spiritual Church.

A Church of right spiritual experience would of course appreciate the divine element in all Church agency, and the

necessity of its employment in all real Church progress. It is this spiritual element, as a matter of experience, that gives both the capacity and the inclination to appreciate it as the true agency of aggression. But there has been a decline in this spiritual character of the experience of the Church, as might be inferred from this decline in her faith in the supernatural, and as is particularly shown in the following facts.

1. In her relaxation and abandonment of certain peculiarities. Methodists were once a peculiar people, separate from the world in their spirit, maxims, and aims, as manifested in their simplicity of dress, in their studied avoidance of worldly amusements and diversions, and in all their general walk and intercourse with society. But that these peculiarities, as thus manifested, are fast being given up, must be evident to the observation of all. Now, if this surrender were attributable solely to an advancement in the Church, in her conceptions of gospel economy—to any new light which she had received from the true source—showing the absurdity, or the folly, or the indifference of all these—then, of course, it could not be construed as indicating any decline in any thing good or valuable; but examination will show that, instead of to these causes, it is to that contact with the world, producing on the one hand a love of its maxims, its fashion, and its spirit, and a desire to conform to them; and, on the other, the dread of; and the desire to escape, the imputation of being singular and over-righteous, that it is for the most part to be attributed. It is but a succumbing to the spirit of the world, and an indication of an abandonment of the Bible as the rule of life, and of spiritual experience as the source of enjoyment.

2. In the dependence of the degree of her piety upon external circumstances. Christianity, as a spiritual experience, derives its sustenance from a divine source. Fed by God, through prayer and faith and holy living on the part of the subject, it lives and flourishes, irrespective of whatever is

without. But the religion of many Methodists is dependent upon circumstances—to a large extent, upon recurring seasons of revival influence. It is a religion which in summer revives and shines, but which in winter withers and dies. As far, therefore, as this is its characteristic, it lacks the spiritual element, and is not spiritual religion.

3. In that aversion, springing up almost everywhere in the bosom of the Church, and existing in many quarters in a high degree, to those external manifestations of religious fervor and joy, once common in the Church—indeed, a prominent characteristic. Now, that such manifestations are a necessary accompaniment of true religion, we affirm not; yet we do maintain, that the almost entire absence of them among Methodists now, as compared with the past, it is difficult to explain, except on the supposition of a decline in that character of Christianity. But even though it be possible to explain this absence on principles which do not require such supposition, but are entirely compatible with any degree of such Christianity—on principles, in fact, which imply an improvement in that Christianity, as practically enjoyed—yet such manifestations being, in no just view of them, in themselves criminal, but on the contrary almost inevitable in certain temperaments, in moments of unusual rise in the tide of spiritual fervor and emotion, it does argue a decline in the right spiritual, in the right experimental characteristics of religion, that among Methodists there should begin to exist, by no means uncommonly, an absolute aversion to such manifestations. And yet, that there does exist such aversion, in an increasingly wide extent, all must perceive—an aversion, too, so strong and decided, as to hold them but as the indications either of disreputable ignorance, or of pitiable, misguided fanaticism.

4. In the absence of suitable reverence for age, though associated with long, laborious, and useful service, every-

where so common in these times. That there is such want of reverence for this class — that there is a disposition to set men aside, simply because they are old and held as antiquated — to elbow them off, because they have not the activity and spirit of their earlier days to hold their places on the arena of public service — that there is a younger class who, claiming to constitute a party of progress, discredit the claims of the older, simply because they are old, must be obvious to all who notice the movements of individuals in the affairs of the Church. Such manifestations are to be witnessed in the common intercourse of society, in the various council-boards of the Church, in her deliberative assemblies, — indeed, under all circumstances, and on all occasions, where by possibility there can be a competition between the claims of the younger and the older. They have their origin, doubtless, in that same spirit of self-sufficiency and intellectual independence which has produced that restlessness of all restraint, of all authority, so characteristic of American society, and the result of its peculiar institutions. Now, such demeanor towards and treatment of those long-trying servants of God — of those who have borne themselves honorably and successfully through the long-continued struggle of a well-spent life, implies a want of reverence for God, of right appreciation of those divine influences which aided them, and of those spiritual results which they have been instrumental in accomplishing — of proper apprehension of that feature of Christianity which identifies its glory with its past benefits and achievements, that can be accounted for only in the decline in, or the absence of, the spiritual characteristics of Christianity, in the experience and spirit of many of the Church.

5. In the decline of the popularity of class-meetings. These meetings involve exercises that can be appreciated and enjoyed, only by those spiritually regenerated or groaning so

to be. Such classes of persons will attend and be fond of them: all others will find them exceedingly irksome, and have a positive aversion to them. The feelings with which class-meetings are regarded by Methodists, we hold to be an unfailing test of personal piety. The rule requiring attendance may and does have an operative effect upon the pious, as constituting that sort of remembrancer of duty that human nature requires; but upon the lukewarm and spiritually dead, it will in the nature of things be to a large extent ineffectual and nugatory. Among these, there is an internal moral cause of difficulty, and it is this which makes the enforcement of the rule so uncertain, if not impracticable. In the earlier days of Methodism these meetings were universally esteemed and universally attended. Then the Church knew and was content with none other than the standard of experimental piety, and abounded with the fruits of spiritual fervor and zeal. Now, there is a fast-growing and wide-spread opposition to this whole feature of Methodist economy, and the rule for its enforcement is to a large extent practically inoperative and dead. A declension in the spiritual, experimental characteristics of the piety of the people, which in more recent times has ensued, in sorrow it is said, furnishes the sufficient, and, perhaps, the chief explanation.

But, if the Church has shown, by all these facts, a decline in the divine element of her Christian experience and piety, how can she be brought back? What steps may be taken that will contribute to arrest this deplorable tendency, and to secure to her religion this its essential feature?

The first we would suggest, is a higher standard, and more particularity in observing it, for admission into the Church. In the earlier periods of Methodism, when the spiritual forces of Christianity were in higher tension and activity, there might have been nothing lost, but rather much gained, by

the policy of a low standard of spiritual tests for admission. The circumstances and influences then surrounding Church-membership, almost certainly insured in all cases a continuance in moral progress, until the right spiritual standard was reached. But now this loose manner of admission, by bringing many in without the necessary spiritual change, and who never go on to realize it, and by the neutralizing influence which their example and their inertness exert upon others who, if untrammelled, would be content with nothing below the right degree of piety, the general standard of the piety of the entire mass is depressed, and the Church herself is reduced in her spiritual enjoyments. An elevation of the standard of admission, freeing the Church of these trammels and depressing influences, and restricting her membership to those of higher spiritual qualifications, would, of course, elevate the spiritual, experimental character of her piety.

It is a great mistake to suppose, that a lower standard of admission will promote the interests of the Church, even in respect of numbers. A higher standard, by elevating the piety of the Church, and thus securing to her more positive power and efficiency, by taking away from the world the specious argument derived from a delinquent membership, and thereby facilitating the access to it of the forces of Christianity, would augment the aggressive resources of the Church, and of necessity promote her more rapid progress. This false notion of a lower standard for the sake of increase, depending upon the influences of the future to rectify the quality, has been, in fact, an impediment to Methodism. By making her membership less spiritual, it has made her aggressive, onward march less rapid.

This elevation of her standard might be effected, without any change in her organic law upon this subject. By right directions from the ministry, given from the pulpit and in private interviews, by allowing suitable time for reflection for

the right counting of the cost, and by taking those occasions for presenting the opportunity for admission when there is but little external excitement, and nothing to control the action but the cool decisions and spontaneous promptings of the individual will, much might be done to obviate unfortunate accessions, and to raise the general character of the religion of the Church to its true elevation of spirituality and power.

Another result which would contribute to the improved condition of the spirituality of Methodism, is a better system of police, or, in other words, of moral discipline, for the membership. The Methodist ministry, by the necessities of the itinerant system, have been to a large extent denied the opportunities of pastoral or disciplinary work ; but as long as the class-meeting system was efficient, this defect was compensated through its instrumentality,—indeed, it is its fulfillment of this particular function that has made it almost indispensable to Methodism, as at present constituted. But declining, as this system is, so greatly in recent times, in its efficiency, this particular work in many places is almost totally neglected. Hence, errors remain uncorrected — admonition and advice which, if afforded, would often forestall and remove evil, are withheld — members are not dealt with, when by example and a continuance of their Church connection harm results — small matters, which in the outset might have been easily removed, are permitted to grow up into serious evils — and in many ways, the causes of demoralization and decline are allowed to continue and to prevail. Now, some change in the general policy of the Church, which would permit her disciplinary regulations to be brought to bear in all these respects, would remove these evils, and, furthermore, would act as a stimulus to exemplariness and care in all that pertains to the general work of the Christian, and hence improve the general characteristics of the religion of the entire

Church. Such a condensation of the appointments of the preachers within their fields of labor, with a view to attention to all these matters, and such provisions as will hold the preachers to them as a part of their accountability, which we have shown to be involved in the proper development of the ministerial function, would secure, in a very great measure, this important result.

Again: a more abundant provision of the facilities of religious reading among the masses, would contribute to improve the spiritual character of the religious experience of the people. It has been the loss of religious tone in the thinking of the people, and of contact with religious ideas—the result of the absence of these facilities—and of the constant employment of the mind in secular thinking, and about secular ideas, superinduced by the monopoly of the reading taste of the people by a secular literature—that has called off the Church from those exercises necessary to the maintenance of a high standard of religious experience.

Finally: the more constant employment of Christians in works of usefulness—their more constant enlistment, personally and directly, in all the enterprises of the Church, which would ensue in a proper development of all the functions of the Church, would contribute to this result. A Church, to be spiritual, must have always something to do of a directly religious character—must have a theatre of religious employment, so broad as to keep her members engaged in works of usefulness to themselves and to others. In that expansion of the forces of the Church—upon which we have elaborately insisted, as so imperatively demanded by all the interests of the Church, and by all the obligations of an effective, progressive Christianity—such a theatre will be found.

These, then, are the conditions: a right ministry and a Church of elevated Christian experience, the fulfilment of which will secure a right recognition and appreciation of the

divine agency as the all-pervading element in all the active forces of the gospel, and which, leaving the Almighty unhindered in the manifestation of his promised power and goodness, will secure to the world the full benefit of the Church's spiritual function.

SECTION VIII.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS IN FAVOR OF THIS AMPLER AND MORE ACTIVE CHURCH SYSTEM.

To that high and extended career of usefulness, the object of that expansion of her forces, the modes and reasons of which it has been our aim to unfold and to urge, Methodism is called from other considerations, which it has not fallen within our design thus far to notice. These, briefly stated, are as follow :

1. The peculiar advantages for such a career, which are derived from her peculiar system. 1st. The unity, energy, and promptness which her organization secures for the development and execution of whatever she undertakes. It is the fault of most Church organizations, that they are wanting in these characteristics—that, based upon the principle of a diffusion, rather than upon that of a concentration of power, they are loose and feeble and inert in all that pertains to organic force, and denied the capabilities in their movements of unity and vigor. But Methodism has specifically provided in her organism for the attribute of power, and for freedom in its exercise; and hence, while under her system, she is left unrestricted in the choice of her modes of development, she has all the requisite elements of vitality and energy for efficient practical execution. 2d. The facilities for diffusion, afforded through the aggressive, expansive character of her itinerant system. In the capacity thus derived for propagating herself—for any territorial extension of her organization and of the resources and objects which it involves—Methodism is peculiar and enjoys unlimited advantages.

But in this combination of strength, and power of concentration, with capacity of unlimited diffusiveness—in this harmonious interaction of the principle of centralization and the principle of universal expansion, thus the peculiar glory of Methodist polity, and rendering it so entirely practicable for Methodism to appropriate every possible function of usefulness, and to extend unlimitedly their exercise—is found another reason, urging her to this wider and all-embracing sphere of action.

2. The peculiarly favorable access offered, and facilities afforded, by American society, to the successful prosecution of all these functions possible to the Church.

In all other countries—perhaps without an exception—it is the immediate effect of the civil institutions existing, to hinder the operations of the Church, and in many of them there are statutory regulations rigidly enforced, enacted with that specific design. The true Church of Christ, where she does exist at all, is so guarded and restrained, that it is only within a limited range that she can unfold herself at all, and even within it her action is greatly enfeebled. In our own country, however, these causes of restriction and hinderance are without existence, and the Church is left free and untrammelled in the prosecution to any extent of her entire capabilities.

In all other countries, the depressed moral condition of large portions of society, manifesting itself in indifference, because of the lack of right religious ideas—in superstition, because of wrong religious training—and in avowed infidelity, because of a misconception or ignorance of religious truth—furnishes a perpetual tide of opposition, that exhibits itself, not merely in the common forms of error and enmity, but often in overt acts of positive resistance, the effect of which is to hamper the Church, and to prevent the free expansion and successful action of her appropriate forces. But here, Christianity has already so generally established a sense of

its claims in the moral consciousness of the people—has contributed already so largely to mould the forms of society, and enters so generally as a controlling element in public sentiment, subjecting all largely to its sway, that no such forms of opposition show themselves; and the Church may expect to encounter, even in the spirit of society, but little resistance to the most unlimited employment and use of all her capabilities; and even if motives to such resistance were in any quarter felt, the genius of our free institutions, and the actual protection they afford to the freedom of conscience and the unrestricted enjoyment of the privileges of religion, would effectually forestall all overt exhibition of them.

Indeed, so far from restriction and preclusion from causes growing out of the moral condition of society, it is the glory of American society that it has reached that state of moral progress, in which it not only presents an open door of access to all the forces of Christianity, but contains already every element possible to it which the Church, for any degree of her development, needs—so that she has but to put forth her energies to combine and avail herself of them, to make the very resources of the social state her own resources, and tributary to whatever of power and influence and enterprise it is her appointed office to appropriate and employ.

When we consider the difficulties which it has ever been the history of the Church to encounter, in all societies and in all states of society, from the restraints imposed by civil institutions, and from the persecutions of men, that there should be at last a state of society on our own soil, universally prevailing, in which this resistance is no longer offered, but in its stead, an open door of access and every facility for the free and unchecked operations of the gospel, surely among that people the Church ought to feel not only invited but bound to exert herself to the utmost, bringing into operation every capability possible to her, and providing

for every result, the achievement of which is appropriate to the widest conception of her legitimate sphere of action.

3. The peculiar social condition of the American people, growing out of the character of our civil institutions.

In our country, the people themselves feel but very partially the controlling power of government, both because of its limitedness, and of its feebleness, even within its own sphere, and because they themselves at last control its action. Left thus to themselves, and self-governed, it is personal virtue, and a personal sense of moral accountability, that are the only guarantees of right conduct, whether as to their civil relations or their personal responsibilities. Nor is it enough for the safety of any, that they themselves are rightly imbued with these conservative, guiding principles; but intimately related as each is by the bonds of society to all the rest, and predominating as the popular element does, and tending to subject every interest to conformity to its own standard, the proper security of each individually, both as it respects the public institutions under which he lives, and as it respects his own private history and interests, depends almost as essentially upon the right moral elevation of the great body of the people, as upon his own personal condition. No people ever so much needed right moral principle, as the controlling element of all action, both public and private, as the American people, because no people were ever so exclusively left to themselves individually—so effectually cut off from all other conservative, subordinating authority, and dependent upon it alone as the only reliable governing agency.

But while there is this exclusivé reliance among the American people upon this moral element, as the only conservative saving one, both in private and public affairs, yet because of that very personal freedom, which is the occasion of its necessity, there is given every opportunity for the play of every possible force which tends to antagonize it. Freedom itself

is an enjoyment that naturally tends to oppose it, and invites the manifestation of every form of vice which the selfish, baser passions and appetites of men would either adopt, as a mode of personal advantage and aggrandizement, or patronize, as a mode of personal gratification and enjoyment. What might be thus expected, as an inference from the general principles of human nature, the slightest observation will show is actually realized in American society. Never perhaps were those social forces which pander to the debasing passions and principles of men, which contribute to modify, to stultify, to eradicate the moral sense of society, more active than at present. It is not merely that men avail themselves of their personal liberties, to seek out spontaneously and incidentally the methods of their own criminal indulgence—it is not merely that they use the random, accidental opportunities that may occur, to betray a corrupt principle, or to follow up a corrupt purpose; but in this country there are a vast variety of vocations, modes of livelihood, that have their foundation expressly in, and derive their only support from, the vicious, the corrupt, and corrupting tastes of the people. To make money, to obtain applause, men turn from the legitimate pursuits of life, to devise and to use the means of making the corrupt tastes and passions of society tributary to their own interests; and under the influence of this stimulus, every agency of this kind, that skill and energy can possibly cause to obtain currency and support, is brought into use to debase the people. With all these influences of appetite and desire on the one side, and of controlling selfishness on the other, to put in action the agencies of evil in this country, under all the license guaranteed by our free institutions, who can estimate the amount of force now brought to bear in American society, to antagonize the good, and to give ascendancy and power to the baser elements of human nature?

But to drive back and successfully repress this mighty force,

now everywhere in such active operation, and to establish and to maintain predominant this moral element, so essential as the palladium of safety to the American people, the Christian Church is the only possible instrumentality. However formidable, in looking over society, may appear these forces of evil, all abroad over the land, and however indispensable this element which they antagonize and powerfully tend to overcome, yet the Christian Church embodies within herself the only hope of society, for the counteraction and suppression of the one, and the successful establishment of the other. Surely, then, there is a necessity for the development of all the power of the Church, for the exhibition and employment of her every possible resource.

4. The constant and increasing influx of the tide of foreign emigration into our country.

The vast and rapidly increasing accessions to our population from this source, are infusing elements into our midst that are on many accounts fearful and alarming. Nor, while the old countries abroad are suffering so much from over-population and oppressive laws, and our own free country offers so many advantages for easy, happy living, is this rate of increase, unless arbitrarily obstructed, likely to become less. It is not merely that their ignorance—which, from the fact that these accessions are mainly constituted of the lowest, most debased, of the countries from which they come, is extreme—disqualifies them for the high prerogatives of sovereign citizens, and that, finding themselves here released from the restraints which, in their native homes, held them in comparative subjection, they rush to the excesses of lawless violence, disturbing the public peace, and bringing into operation influences that antagonize all the higher interests of society; but it is that they are for the most part the dupes of a religion and of a priesthood, in deadly opposition to our religion, and that seek the overthrow of our institutions and the liber-

ties of the people, that so much is to be apprehended from their rapid inflowing into our midst.

But it is not by arbitrary force or statutory regulation, as popular as the idea is in many quarters, that these evils, thus with good reason apprehended, are to be forestalled and precluded. Agencies of this kind have been in all ages ineffectual for the suppression of evils of an intellectual and moral character. They are contrary to a true philosophy, and unsuited as they are to the genius of our government, to the prevailing spirit of our people, they have no adaptation to the ends in view, and necessarily would prove unsuccessful. It is the influence of light, intellectual and moral—it is the pressure of the powerful, ever-active agencies of knowledge and true religion, brought to bear all around and specifically among these people, that, removing their ignorance, correcting their errors, subjecting their passions, inspiring them with right religion, with right moral sentiment, and right self-control, and moulding them into the spirit of our own indigenous population, that would take from them those characteristics that now make their residence here so much dreaded, and secure to them the qualifications of harmless, if not useful citizenship. The needed weapons in this warfare are not to be carnal: such fail to address the causes which give rise to the evils apprehended, having no actual relation to them, and, if employed, would involve a policy wrong in itself, and productive of still greater evils, and without success, as to its specific objects. They are the weapons of intellectual and moral light, which this struggle now demands; and if the just spirit of opposition to the evils entailed by the existence of this population in our midst, could be so turned as to concentrate in their proper employment, not only would the result be obtained, sought for by those who look to the employment of force, of a preclusion of the evils of this population, but

more—the conversion of this population into enterprising, useful inhabitants, contributing to the resources, to the progress, and glory of our happy land.

Not only, then, considerations of patriotism, of loyalty to our own religion, whose interests are imperiled, but the true missionary spirit of Christianity, which would seek the evangelization of this population, most of which is as far removed from all true religion as heathens themselves, all demand that, at this time, there be no reservation of strength in the Church of God, but that everywhere, and in highest degree, her resources, of every kind, be fully aroused and brought into action.

5. The commanding advantages which the position of this country affords, in respect of that mighty system of means which Providence is employing for the evangelization of all mankind.

The eyes of the civilized world are turned to our own country. So elevated and commanding is its position, that from it is perpetually going out influences, that control largely the current history of the world. If, then, her light be a true light—the light of an exalted Christian civilization, how great and universal are the blessings which it confers!

If the extensive commercial and international relationships, sustained by this nation towards all nations of any degree of social progress, and which are perpetually widening in extent and comprehensiveness, were pervaded and controlled by a religious element, and made to have a religious effect—if all these were channels, along which perpetually ran currents of gospel grace and influence, to reform and elevate the world, as will be the case in proportion as the regenerating influences of Christianity shall have actually diffused themselves in the great heart of the nation, and the forces of society are subjected to their sway, how constantly and powerfully would they contribute to the accomplishment of

the great purpose of Heaven, the universal prevalence of the knowledge and kingdom of Christ!

If with all the advantages which this country enjoys—from her relative geographical position, from her growing international influence, from her facilities of access and communication with the rest of mankind—the fervor of her religious zeal were to become so high and universal as to seek, as it certainly should, a constant outlet in deeds of missionary enterprise, in aggressive religious movements in other lands, how extensive her facilities, how full and abundant her opportunities, for any possible efforts she may be able to employ, for any possible impress she may have capacity to make!

No people ever enjoyed so many advantages as the American people for becoming the great agent of Providence, in promoting the moral progress of the world, and in furthering the consummation of the grand design of the world's existence, its universal evangelization; and, sustaining this high relation, occupying this important position, the Church should not only recognize the high responsibilities thence devolving, but should seek to discharge them, in the only practicable way, by the complete development of her entire system of resources.

